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# Charles McKenzie, l'homme seul

by Elizabeth Arthur

To a remote area, described vaguely as lying between Rainy Lake and Lake Nipigon<sup>1</sup>, in the heyday of the Nor'westers came the clerk Charles McKenzie, a distant relative of the great Mackenzies — Sir Alexander and Roderick of Terrebonne<sup>2</sup>. Lac Seul the French called the place, and the Nor'westers had adopted the name. The English from Hudson's Bay, moving into an alien land, stumbled over the unaccustomed syllables; Lake Sal they sometimes called it or, with a strange prescience concerning the fate of the English-Wabigoon river system, Lake Sale. Here Charles McKenzie remained, with the exception of his brief unhappy sojourn in Canada in the 1820's, until he returned in 1854, an old man and still a clerk, with many years' service in the Hudson's Bay Company. Without the money to return to Scotland, nor any inclination to return to Canada, he moved to Red River where he died within a year.

As he put it in his letter of resignation, "Forty-five years' residence in any one place, be it ever so poor, has more power over the human mind than one is aware of."<sup>3</sup> It is precisely the effects of long association with such a remote area that this paper seeks to examine. Since Charles McKenzie left an extraordinarily full chronicle of his reactions to events over the years, it is possible to enter into much of the experience of this lonely man. Loneliness and the sense of grievance permeate the journals, so that it is not easy to separate just observation from the bitterness of failure. It was easy for those who condemned him without hope of promotion, transfer, or increase in salary, to a post so minor that it warrants few references in the history of the Hudson's Bay Company,<sup>4</sup> to seize upon his obvious bias to discount any criticisms he made of Company policy. Now it is important to remember that such isolation provided him with a unique insight into problems that touched others more briefly and thus less memorably.

Charles McKenzie joined the North West Company in 1803 with every hope of advancement. An apprentice clerk, considerably older than most young Scots entering the service, he was given almost from the beginning responsibilities

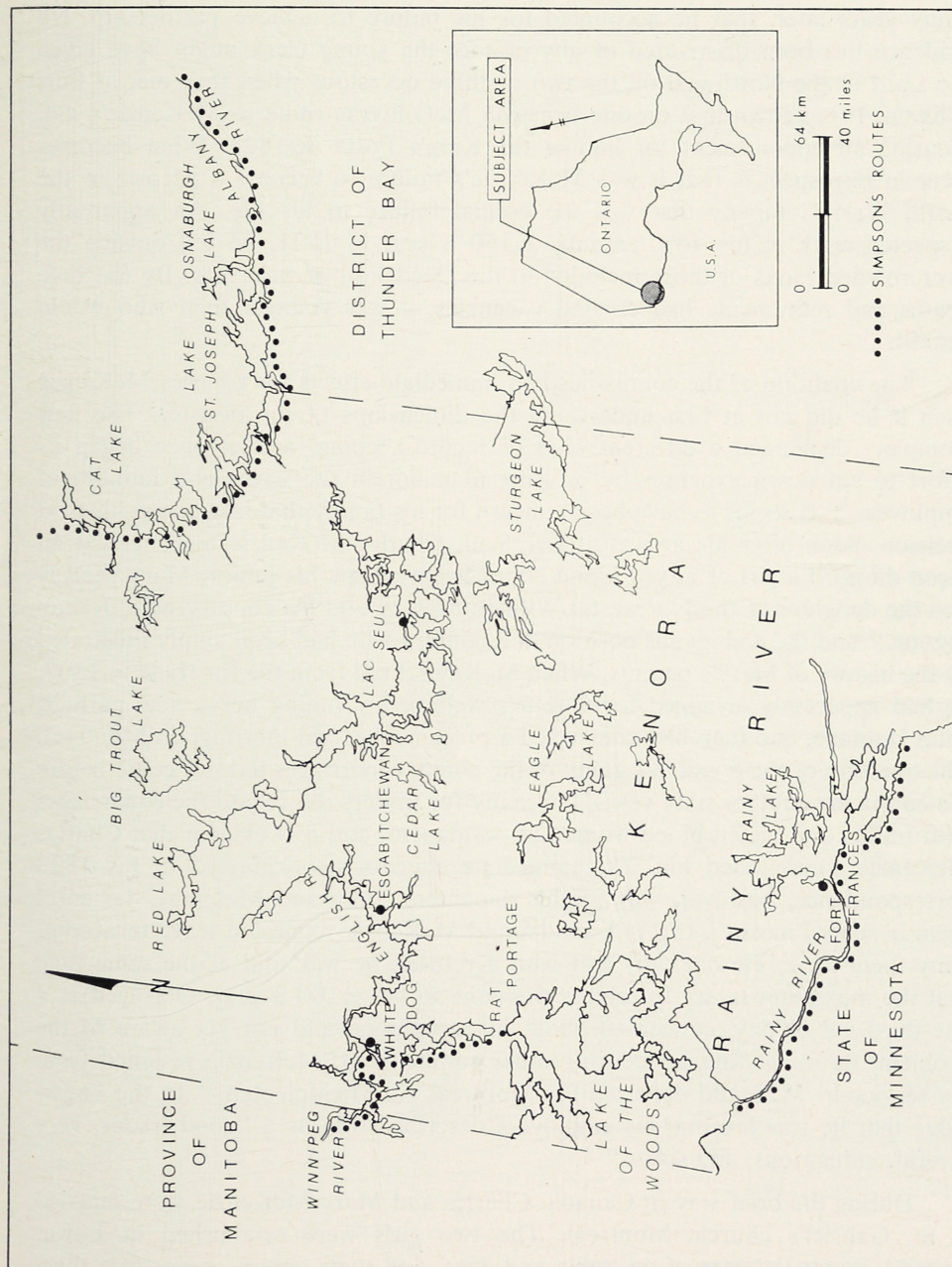
matching his age rather than his experience in North America. In 1804, he was one of two clerks (and the other was unable to keep any of the records<sup>5</sup>) who accompanied F. A. Laroque on the first of several expeditions to the Missouri Indians. The possibilities for promotion for a conscientious, literate clerk, with influential relatives, taking part in an exciting enterprise, seemed bright indeed. The Missouri expeditions, however, showed poor financial returns, and were abandoned;<sup>6</sup> still, the failure could not be blamed upon a clerk who, from all accounts, had acquitted himself well.

The next posting brought McKenzie into what is now northwestern Ontario. Occasionally he came to the great rendez-vous at Fort William;<sup>7</sup> his winters were spent at various posts in the Lac Seul area. Nor'westers had first established a post on the lake in 1801, and for several seasons had faced competition there not only from the Hudson's Bay Company but also from the XY traders. This excitement ended in 1805, when all the competitors departed. In 1807, the year McKenzie arrived in the area, the North West Company returned to Lac Seul, and remained in continuous occupancy thereafter.<sup>8</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company maintained posts at Escabitchewan to the west and Osnaburgh to the east, and sent its goods through Lac Seul<sup>9</sup>. Unfortunately for Charles McKenzie's career, there were no violent incidents to call attention to his fighting qualities, and the returns he was able to ship southward were not large enough to remind his employers of his prowess as a trader.

The exhausted state of the Lac Seul area, even as early as 1810, made it impossible to produce impressive returns and this has been advanced as an explanation for McKenzie's failure to achieve partnership in the North West Company.<sup>10</sup> The promotion in 1814 of two clerks with experience comparable to McKenzie's might suggest another explanation. Both Angus Bethune and John McLoughlin had uncles influential in the company.<sup>11</sup>

McKenzie's link with the corridors of power was far less direct. His hope centred upon the recommendation of his distant relative, Roderick MacKenzie of Terrebonne, by this time retired from the fur trade and busy collecting material for the history he hoped to write. Eagerly, Charles acceded to his request for an account of the Missouri expeditions,<sup>12</sup> hoping that this was the road to promotion. What did happen to the enterprise, which resulted in the publication of his journal seventy years later by Roderick MacKenzie's grandson-in-law, L. R. Masson,<sup>13</sup> affords an unhappy glimpse into the collapse of Charles McKenzie's hopes. Masson observed that, after the coalition of the fur trading companies in 1821, Charles had no friends in influential positions;<sup>14</sup> he did not indicate what efforts, if any, the Honourable Roderick had put forth on his behalf in the decade preceding the coalition.

It should be added that, in old age, Charles McKenzie declared that he had been "a reproach and an eyesore to the late William McGillivray."<sup>15</sup> It was thus,



many years later, that he accounted for his failure to achieve partnership. No evidence has been discovered of any offence the young clerk might have given the Lord of the Northwest on the two or three occasions when they met at Fort William. It is known that on one occasion McGillivray came to McKenzie's aid, securing an appointment for him at the King's Posts in 1823. What becomes clear in retrospect is that it was McKenzie's failure to become a partner in the North West Company that was the crucial failure in his life. An apparently respected clerk in his 40's, earning £150 a year in 1821, he fell outside the overcrowded ranks of those included in the Deed Poll of that year. By the time deaths and retirements had created vacancies, it was younger men who would benefit.

The coalition of the companies had immediate effects for Charles McKenzie even if he did not at first understand the dimensions of the disaster. The new Company demanded a different kind of record-keeping, and at once began its effort to cut down expenses by refusing to maintain the wives and families of employees.<sup>16</sup> It seems to have been concern for his family that influenced his next decision. Soon after his arrival at Lac Seul, Charles McKenzie had married *au façon du nord* a girl of mixed blood about twenty years his junior. Mary McKay was the daughter of the Nor'wester William McKay and his country wife, Josette Latour,<sup>17</sup> and the ambiguous position of a country wife had been amply illustrated by the history of Mary's parents. When McKay retired from the fur trade in 1807, he had apparently arranged for Josette's welfare by finding her a new partner, John Haldane, and then had contracted a presumably legal marriage in Montreal. The question of the possible legality of the country marriages did not come before the courts for another sixty years, but many fur traders did regard their marriages with Indian and mixed blood women as permanent, and it is evident that Charles McKenzie so regarded his. The immediate concern he expressed in his 1823 correspondence, however, was for his daughters, Julia and Margaret. To enrol them in school meant a trip to Canada, and McKenzie requested leave to accompany them there. He not only met with a refusal, he was told at the same time that the maximum salary for clerks was now to be £100 a year. Outraged at a one-third cut in pay, concerned about his daughters, and not yet aware to the problems he might find in securing other employment, McKenzie resigned from the service in 1823 and departed for Montreal via Michipicoten.<sup>18</sup> In the knowledge that he was leaving, his employers described him as a "good trader, very careful, industrious, and sober."<sup>19</sup>

During the brief stay in Canada, Charles and Mary McKenzie were married at St. Gabriel's church, Montreal. The two girls were established in Lower Canada, under the care of an uncle and aunt, and their parents never saw them again. There were childish letters<sup>20</sup> about progress at school and concerned exchanges among the adults as the cost of education continued to eat up at least a third of their father's salary.<sup>21</sup> Julia, considered the brighter of the two, appar-

ently died as a child; Margaret married Angus MacDonald of Bytown. It would seem that MacDonald assumed all fur traders were wealthy men, and misunderstandings over Margaret's share of her father's reputed wealth clouded relationships between the two households. Such an estrangement was hardly surprising when one considers the distance in miles and years that separated Margaret from Lac Seul. Letters, at best, covered the physical distance once a year, and Margaret's letters were often too late to be carried by the annual brigade. Charles McKenzie, attempting to heal the breach, agreed that the dividends from some of his stocks should go to her during his lifetime and that the stocks themselves should be hers after his death,<sup>22</sup> but his effort failed. All contact with Margaret ceased in later years. In his last months at Red River, McKenzie was writing Canadian acquaintances for any news of his daughter, living or dead. One reply, written after McKenzie's death, reported the rumour that the MacDonalds, last heard of in Kingston, had left there for the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The separation from his daughters was only one of a series of adversities that befell McKenzie in the 1820's, adversities from which he never recovered. When he left the north for Montreal in June, 1823, he had a healthy credit balance,<sup>24</sup> most of which was withdrawn to subsidize his new ventures. His new position at the King's Posts was unsatisfactory because, he claimed, the agents there took advantage of him. Then, at his own expense, he travelled to Nipissing where he was re-admitted to the Hudson's Bay Company service.<sup>25</sup> There is no record of his years on Lake Nipissing except one retrospective remark concerning an incident in which he claimed he had saved "the Company out of the hands of unprincipled men."<sup>26</sup> McKenzie may well have hoped for advancement there since the Lake Huron district was under the command of Chief Factor John McBean whom he always regarded as a friend.<sup>27</sup> McBean's influence with Governor Simpson does not seem to have been great, and Charles McKenzie, his wife, and their two younger children, Hector and Catherine, returned to Lac Seul on August 19, 1827. Further financial loss had already accompanied the bankruptcy of McGillivray, Thain & Co.<sup>28</sup> and now began the long imprisonment at one post, the abandonment of all hope of change. His employers were now noting that "he had been useful but his best days are over. Altho' he may some years ago have looked for promotion in the NW service, he is in no respect to be compared to any of the present expectants & according to my opinion should consider himself fortunate if allowed to retain his present position."<sup>29</sup> Governor Simpson put the matter even more brutally in his 1832 assessment. "I think it would be highly inexpedient to promote such men who have no other claim to advancement than their antiquity."<sup>30</sup>

McKenzie's own journals and reports over the next twenty-seven years do offer some support for this judgment. He hated the paper work, and fumed over the necessity of keeping a daily journal. He alternated between discursive daily entries, often of fascinating (and no doubt to his employers, infuriating) irrele-

vancy to the work of the post and cryptic summaries of the events of an entire month in a few lines. One assumes that both styles received reprimands;<sup>31</sup> certainly McKenzie never discovered an acceptable balance. When he had occasion to protest a policy or the implementation of a policy by other Company men, he was far less effective than he might have been, permitting emotion to obscure judgment. One has only to contrast his journals with those kept at the small nearby post of Escabitchewan in its last year of operation by Nicol Finlayson to perceive some of the reasons that Finlayson rose in the Company service and McKenzie did not.

In a sense McKenzie had reconciled himself to spending the rest of his working life at Lac Seul, all the time dreading the thought of retirement on inadequate resources. Still one may question the complete sincerity of his 1831 self-appraisal. "The most that can be said of my capacity," he wrote, "is 'Mediocrity' — I do not wish to take people by surprize. I have weighted my own merits with impartiality and I know that I am deficient of what others possess."<sup>31</sup> Usually when bitter thoughts of inadequacy or injustice are included in the journals or reports, McKenzie would cut them off sharply with "No matter" and change the subject. In this case, however, he permitted his thoughts to move on to a far from humble conclusion — "but in recompense I possess qualities tho' less bright, may not have been less necessary to carry out our pursuits in this Country — I thank Heaven for three ingredients in my composition in particular, Reverence to my God, integrity to my employers and good will to my fellow creatures." Two of these characteristics would hardly have been of any great interest to his superiors; his integrity was not in question, or he would promptly have been removed from the service.

Ambivalence about his own abilities extended to McKenzie's attitude toward Lac Seul itself. There are occasional references to the poverty of the region, even when it was part of the North West Company's Nipigon District, and to the devastation of fires and epidemics in the early days. Confronted with poor returns, forest fires and epidemics in later years, however, McKenzie was apt to reflect on the excellence of the trade before 1821.<sup>32</sup> The number of posts in the area declined, the personnel at Lac Seul decreased over the years, but the quantity of furs shipped out remained stable, if unremarkable.<sup>33</sup> McKenzie could exult in the returns of a particularly good year like 1840, but at the same time observe mournfully that he never expected to see such a large shipment again. A cause for concern that he pointed out repeatedly was the almost exclusive reliance on muskrats. "The day they disappear the Lac Seul post may disappear with them," he reported in 1843; thirteen years later, he learned with outrage that the Company no longer wanted muskrats from the region, and prophesied the destruction of a post that had survived many disasters. In his final entry for 1847 he declared that never before had he seen such empty stores, and all because of the "imperial ukase against Rats."

In those long years in isolation, the only break came in the summer journeys to Albany and those were undertaken irregularly in later years. McKenzie went on competently handling a diminishing trade, dealing with Indians he had known for decades, ruminating about the past (in the Highlands or in Lac Seul), about the fate of the Indians in his region, about the devastating effects of Company policy as he saw it, about the society of Lac Seul. His enthusiasm for Scottish history was well known to his contemporaries but only the centenary of Culloden produced a reference in his journal on December 31, 1845. It had been a year, he wrote, "not I hope so remarkable in the country of my nativity as was 1745. My father bore arms there — on which side 'tis nothing now — while his inglorious son! No matter!" Governor Simpson jeered at McKenzie's preoccupation with the past, calling him "a queer prosing long Winded little highland body, who traces his lineage back to Ossian."<sup>34</sup> But he did not jeer about McKenzie's much longer diatribes against Company policy. It is possible that Simpson was less aware of one concern than the others; it is also possible that reference to one could be used simply for ridicule, while reference to the other might raise serious questions of policy, in which McKenzie was by no means the only dissident.

Dislike for the Hudson's Bay Company was far from rare among the old Nor'westers but McKenzie's comments upon the effect of that Company's policy upon the Indians were more detailed than most. In a letter to his old patron, Hon. Roderick MacKenzie, he asked, "What in the name of Goodness is that protection the British Government ever afforded to the Natives of this Country? Has not the British Government sold them to a monopoly?"<sup>35</sup> It was his contention that in various areas of policy, the Company made a series of decisions, the net result of which was the diminution of the fur trade in posts like Lac Seul and the suffering of Indians who had come to depend upon it.

After 1821, Lac Seul and its outposts — Cat Lake, Red Lake, Deer Lake, Escabitchewan, and Sturgeon Lake — were assigned to the Albany District of the Southern Department of Company operations. Links with the Lake Superior area were largely broken as the old east-west axis of the North West Company's trade vanished. The removal of competition between rival companies also meant a decreased importance for Lac Seul, and its outposts were abandoned one by one, the last, Sturgeon Lake, closing in 1837. Even more significant the Lac La Pluie area to the south, also cut off from its former connections with Lake Superior, was transferred to the Northern Department and thus linked to Red River, to Norway House and to York Factory. It was obvious that the Northern Department formed a much larger and more important sphere of Company operations than did the Southern, with headquarters at Moose Factory. Moreover, Lac La Pluie (called Fort Frances after 1830) and its outposts were close to the American border, and the Company sanctioned quite different actions for posts near dangerous competitors than for inland ones like Lac Seul. Indians began to make the long southern journey for higher prices and more generous credit, and

McKenzie began his long years of complaint both on behalf of a particular post and on behalf of the Indians for whom the rigours of the long journey, the incidence of quarrels with Indians through whose territory they passed, and even the breaking of old patterns of behaviour brought misery that no Company post could alleviate.

As long as old Nor'westers were in command at Lac La Pluie, the magnitude of the problem was not fully realized. Both Dr. John McLoughlin and J. D. Cameron tried to discourage Indians from coming from long distances to their post,<sup>36</sup> but by the 1830's, their influence was no longer exerted. Cameron did not leave the district until 1835, but for several years before that time he had spent most of the year at Fort Alexander, at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, and the day-to-day decisions at Fort Frances were made by the clerk, William Sinclair. With Sinclair, and with Nicol Finlayson who was in charge of the district in the 1840's, McKenzie carried on a running battle. Sinclair had very early stated his policy: he would buy from the Lac Seul Indians if they appeared, and he would make no attempt to collect from them any of the debts they might owe McKenzie, for fear that they might be offended and trade with the Americans instead.<sup>37</sup> There are few Fort Frances journals for the later years but the bitterness McKenzie continued to feel against Sinclair suggests that the policy did not alter. The personal animus is clearest in the 1850 journal when for the first time in many years the boats from Lac La Pluie went out to Albany by way of Lac Seul. Sinclair, by then a Chief Factor, was in command. It is difficult to determine how much of McKenzie's comment was a factual reiteration of the details of a long dispute, how much was aroused by the contrast between the excellent equipment and competent personnel of the visitors and the poorly-provided Lac Seul, and how much flowed from the contrast between the two men and their place in the Company hierarchy, two men who had long known each other, married to cousins, each named Mary McKay.

McKenzie expressed the full agony of the years of competition in his journal entry for June 30, 1850. "What it is to be a Chief Factor; happy Lac La Pluie District — Red River seems to have been made for your hand. Sneer not a poor Lac Seul. Remember when you were obliged to send your men . . . to Lac Seul to be fed from Christmas to Bare Ice in the Spring. Lac Seul was then the Renfort of Lac La Pluie — they were on friendly terms — no separate interest — but no sooner Red River was established then you disowned former friendship and became our greatest Enemy. I speak the truth. I care not for favour when I am denied justice." Thus in old age McKenzie seems to have forgotten that he was writing a formal journal entry. Temporarily, at least, he also forgot that the establishment of Red River did not immediately bring any injury to Lac Seul and, more important, that by mid-century it no longer mattered very much what individual was in charge at Fort Frances or the more recently-established Rat Portage. Company policy had determined that these posts would be given



preferential treatment. It was against the policy rather than any individual that McKenzie was railing when he denounced "the necessity that each post of the Northern Department has ever been under, of having in his neighbour's property, that neither the Resolves of Council nor the Tenth Commandment could overcome nor mitigate."<sup>38</sup> Over the years, the Resolves of Council provided little reassurance.

By 1839, the advantage of the frontier posts was widened when liquor was banned in the interior. McKenzie seems to have assumed that lavish gifts of liquor were indispensable to a successful Indian trade, and to have raised no questions concerning hardships springing from its abuse. Moreover, any statements he did make about the desirability of temperance applied to all residents of the post equally. He chose to omit the details of brawls during the years until he was specifically asked to describe them, and, if any injuries resulted, to take sworn depositions from each of the combatants. The intrusion of any suggestion of legal action shocked him. His lengthy journal entry for November 25, 1837, did give some details of a wild fight in which two of his best workmen received crippling injuries, but, at the same time, it made any possibility of legal action against the combatants remote indeed. McKenzie noted that as soon as he heard the sounds of breaking furniture, he locked himself in his quarters since long experience had taught him this was the wisest course. His action had perhaps the additional merit in his eyes of forcing him to rely on hearsay evidence from that point on. He did not attempt to take depositions from anyone, and expressed this horror and outrage at the idea. "What? Of men who knew not what they were about & to criminate themselves!!!"

In retrospect the unwelcome instructions which McKenzie managed partially to evade can be seen as the beginning of a change in policy. Two years later the word arrived that the gift or sale of spirituous liquor to the Indians was to be banned throughout the Albany district, with the exception of the Albany post itself. McKenzie reported in August, 1839 "The news came upon the Indians like a Thunder Bolt." In the following spring, when he prepared his annual report, he made more specific observations about the effect of the new regulation. The Indians had chosen not to visit Lac Seul during the winter, had left their packs outside, and a good deal of damage had resulted. In October, 1841, McKenzie told the story of one irate Lac Seul Indian. The Lobster had expressed his fury at great length and proposed to go to Lac La Pluie to confront Governor Simpson in person when the governor made his next trip to Red River. McKenzie's acquaintance with the local Indians assured him that The Lobster was too unpopular to become a leader of revolt, however much the rest might agree with him on this one issue. But now it was evident that Indians would be making that trip to the south for other reasons than meeting the Governor; Lac La Pluie could offer them liquor, while Lac Seul could not.

At the height of this intensified controversy, it was Nicol Finlayson who was

in charge at Fort Frances. Twenty years before, Finlayson had served at Lac Seul and Escabitchewan when his salary and responsibilities had been less than those of his senior, Charles McKenzie. Indeed, he had once had the same problem with Company men from Sandy Lake drawing Indians away from his post,<sup>39</sup> and neither the passage of years, the promotion to the rank of Chief Factor, nor McKenzie's intemperate complaints against him caused him to ignore Lac Seul completely. He even urged the Company to reconsider its ban on liquor at that post<sup>40</sup> as did Thomas Corcoran at Albany but Governor Simpson refused to make any permanent alteration in the policy.<sup>41</sup> There does seem to have been a partial relaxation of the ban for outfit 1848, but "by some oversight or other the Liquor remained at Moose Factory."<sup>42</sup> By this time McKenzie considered the case hopeless; the Indians who wanted rum had already deserted to Fort Frances, leaving their debts to him unpaid.

"What a happy Asylum for fraudulent Debtors in this LLP District" he wrote on August 29, 1848, in the knowledge at last that the personnel in charge there made no difference whatever. In 1847, he had ridiculed Finlayson's actions in giving credit to Lac Seul Indians ("Some may think that a supererogation task for a Chief Factor") but, within a year, Finlayson was succeeded by Sinclair and the situation, if anything, deteriorated further. McKenzie claimed that now (May, 1849) men were being sent on a six days' march north from Fort Frances to trade with the Lac Seul Indians and to draw their furs to the Northern Department. The old techniques of opposition were being used, even though all were employed by the same Company. In fact, Simpson had summarized the problem years earlier; credit to "runabouts" should end, but the presence of competition near the American border necessitated the paying of more generous prices and the continuance of gifts of rum there.<sup>43</sup> Inland posts like Lac Seul might vanish but their plight and that of the Indians who had come to rely upon them were irrelevant to Company plans.

Statements of concern over the physical welfare of the Indians are common throughout McKenzie's journals; almost equally common but much more difficult to interpret are the references to customs, beliefs and what might be called their spiritual welfare. In his early years, McKenzie was critical of the Company and of the churches, because no missionary activity reached so remote a post as Lac Seul.<sup>44</sup> It was not until June of 1841, with the arrival of Rev. William Mason of the Wesleyan Missionary Society and his interpreter, Mr. Henry Bird Steinhauer that there occurred "the first Sunday services ever held at this place." The lonely McKenzie, who at that time had not even visited Albany for six years, welcomed his visitors, took advantage of their presence to have his will witnessed, and later noted with real regret the departure of Mr. Mason, "a winning and informed Gentleman." But the description of the ceremonies strikes an odd note. Repeatedly the reader must ask whether McKenzie was unconsciously echoing phrases from his distant childhood, or whether long experience in the north had permitted

him to see how ironic these phrases were in the Lac Seul context. The description of the baptism of forty Indian children refers to the apparently instant salvation brought "to the hitherto benighted children of the forest." The comment is made: "The Indians are excellent Listeners — no Orator could wish for better listeners than an Assembly of Indians." No one was in a better position than Charles McKenzie to judge the significance of such seeming attention, but he added no clarification. In June of the following year it is notable that the ministrations of Mason received less sympathetic treatment. "Prayers and Baptizings today to a late hour" does not suggest much enthusiasm for benefits conferred; nor does the reference to the marriages of three of his workmen, followed by "One of the new married ladies of yesterday brought forth a fine Boy this evening. Quick work this!" McKenzie showed some pleasure in describing the "exhortations to weary sinners" during the course of which a number of those listening intently had their homes ransacked. The conclusion this time strikes an unmistakable note; such thefts were "a sure sign that the natives are making advances in civilization."

At the end of May, 1844, Rev. Peter Jacobs arrived with the announcement that the Lac La Pluie mission was to be moved to Lac Seul in the following spring and with a request that timber be prepared for a home for himself and his numerous family. This time McKenzie's attitude was hostile. His stated reason for opposition was that the Lac Seul post was too poor to maintain a missionary on a permanent basis, especially one with so many children as Jacobs. From Albany came word that the plans were news to Chief Trader Corcoran, who stressed his inability to provide any additional workmen or supplies.<sup>45</sup> It was clear from the beginning that Jacobs was far less welcome as a person than Mason had been, and it would appear also that, in the years since the first missionary had arrived, McKenzie's views about the effectiveness of such enterprises and the obligations they placed upon the post had hardened considerably.

In the epidemic which was claiming lives as early as February, 1845 McKenzie accepted the logic of the Indian argument that children should be buried where they had been baptized, and set to work to have "coffins made, church services read at the post." The Report for that year is also full of references to the misery of the Indians and their unwillingness to "come under the pale of the Christian religion." In spite of protests, Jacobs did arrive with his family. The children were sick when they arrived but recovered, as McKenzie noted with less than jubilation.<sup>46</sup> Jacobs then gathered a group of Indians, took them to the nearest place where wood was to be cut, and set to the job of building two small houses about a quarter mile from the post. McKenzie considered these buildings "no better than pigstys" and questioned why "all this mighty work" was being carried on when he had a much better building available at the fort. An argument ensued in which McKenzie was told that "his heart was not in the mission", a charge he made no effort to deny. Jacobs then announced that, since the two families could not agree, he would winter elsewhere; the following day,

he changed his mind, apparently not as a result of any apologies or entreaties from the McKenzies but, after an excursion to get provisions for the winter, Jacobs again decided on moving his family to Fort Frances, where they would presumably "be more comfortable than we could make them here." There was no further effort to establish the Wesleyans at Lac Seul, and, indeed, there was little indication that the Company desired such expansion any more than McKenzie did.<sup>47</sup>

The efforts of other churches in the area aroused somewhat different reactions. The nearest Roman Catholic mission was the one set up at White Dog Falls on the Winnipeg River. To it travelled The Lobster in his wrath over the lack of rum. In August, 1842, McKenzie reported that The Lobster had become a Roman Catholic, and then spread word among the Lac Seul Indians that the Methodists were out to cheat them. McKenzie asked him whether Father Belcourt at White Dog had indicated that payment of debts was a Christian virtue, and The Lobster assured him the matter had not been mentioned; then, after a pause, he added, "He is not a trader to say that." Both McKenzie's prejudice against Roman Catholics and his confidence that The Lobster had no following shine through this passage. One might even deduce a certain pleasure at the Indian's identification of the Protestant religion and the rise of capitalism.

It was to be expected that McKenzie would be more sympathetic to the aims of the Islington mission established by the Anglicans on the site of the "ci-devant White Dog."<sup>48</sup> He used the good offices of the priests there to transmit letters to Red River, and his journal and letters contain a number of admiring references to Bishop Anderson of Rupert's Land, who visited Lac Seul in 1852. Both his younger children were educated at Red River and became Anglicans; Catherine married Thomas Cook, a schoolmaster who was later ordained in the Anglican church.<sup>49</sup> It was not surprising that years in the north had blurred for McKenzie any doctrinal lines of division; his childhood training in the Church of Scotland had been eroded through the course of time to a general acceptance of Protestantism, modified greatly by heretical ideas of his own and by the study of Indian beliefs.

There is no reason to believe that McKenzie, when he first came to North America, viewed the Indians any differently from other young Scots in the fur trade. In the early years the references he made to Indians in his journals were similar to those found in many contemporary accounts. The best-known Indians might receive a half-mocking description; the effect of policy upon the amount of fur to be collected was constantly noted in business-like fashion. But at this stage it was always a member of another civilization holding himself aloof, noting what to him were outlandish customs. Gradually, however, this changed. The experience of isolation from his European inheritance, his study of the customs of the Indians around him, his devotion to his half-Scottish, half-Indian wife, Mary McKay, and his concern over the prejudice his children faced, created in

McKenzie a set of ideas so remote from those of the early Victorian era that they merit some examination.

His celebration of the Queen's birthday in 1846 was at least unusual; he gave his Victoria coronation medal to an Indian who regarded it as a poor substitute for rum. By this time, there were many examples of McKenzie's acceptance of the Indian valuation of more than Coronation medals. When in his 1845 Report he described a so-called murder that the Indians regarded as "retributive justice" he was obviously in agreement with them. An examination of the journals over the years reveals the shifting from European values. In May, 1823, he described the Indians as "indolent by nature, cheats by tuition;" while in no way altering his view that crime was a European contribution, he revised his comments on indolence. By January 1830, he was writing "it has been more than once a matter of surprise to me how they exert themselves in their present wretched state." Instead of a denunciation to Two Hearts' laziness or bigamy, there is a good-humoured account of the difficulties between the two wives, ending with "the sex has cheated me of many a young man's furs in my time."

In his own loneliness, McKenzie found himself intrigued with the Indian idea that "beaver pine away and die for want of society",<sup>50</sup> certainly an unusual explanation for the declining value of Lac Seul furs. Long years of observation also made him aware of changing Indian attitudes as their own despair deepened. The widespread illness in the summer of 1845, which McKenzie diagnosed as jaundice, produced a kind of callousness he had never seen before. The Indians refused to care for the sick or bury the dead. McKenzie was convinced that, remote as Lac Seul was from the routes of European travellers, it was an area where the Indians congregated and carried every disease that appeared at Red River. The spring of 1846 brought influenza, then measles and dysentery followed in turn. At first there were no deaths at the fort from either disease, although there were reports of Indian deaths all through the summer. By September, the fort also was affected; five died and out of 70 or more people then around the post not 20 were able to catch a fish or care for the sick. Two more died in October, and the stores were empty, but Lac Seul had survived its worst series of illnesses since 1819 when measles had carried off 46 at the post. On both occasions, Indian fatalities can only be guessed at, since the record of deaths only included those living at the fort itself. McKenzie did comment that small-pox was not the scourge it had once been; one of the Indians who died in 1845 was described as the only pock-marked one in the district, whereas there had been many thirty years before. For treatment of any illnesses at the fort, there were the few standard medicines included in the supplies, but neither Charles McKenzie nor his wife seem to have had any high opinion of their effectiveness.<sup>51</sup> When the clerk in charge at Sturgeon Lake sent for medicine for his sick wife, it was Mary McKenzie who made the four-day winter journey,<sup>52</sup> and it is likely that Indian rather than European treatment brought about the woman's recovery.

Against epidemics McKenzie could provide no protection for the Indians in general or for his workers at the fort. In other respects, he was convinced that it was possible to alleviate the harshness of their lives, except that the Hudson's Bay Company zeal for economy brought suffering with it. In 1847 he described the plight of the destitute Baptiste Vincent, too old and infirm to make canoes any more, a man who "put not a few thousand pounds into the Company's pockets in his Generation — so much for old age and fallen greatness." McKenzie's specific statement in the same journal that the Indians hired to accompany the boats to Albany returned because their rations were too small elicited an angry comment from some official at headquarters. Written in the margin of the journal is "C. McKenzie's statement concerning rations is not correct and he is well aware of it."

Whether any rebuke was sent to him on that occasion or not, McKenzie continued his comments on the excellence of Indian employees and their inadequate payment. The following year he noted the departure of the boats with the crews all Indian except for one European, "who is by no means the best." He remained consistent in the belief expressed in his 1834 Report that there were as many honest men among the Indians "as can be collected from an equal number of Europeans without the fear of shackles & fetters. They prove faithless on occasion, but they have good instructors." It is more difficult to determine what if any distinction McKenzie drew between the Indians and those of mixed ancestry. In the 1838 Report he concluded that "pure natives brought up at the establishment make better servants than the half-breeds, but they are more attach (sic) to their own way of life than to ours. They are therefore apt to return to their kindred and make the worst sort of Indians." In his journal entry for January 1, 1846, he called the métis more Indian than European, but less appreciative than Indians. When sober, they were apathetic and silent, and so they remained for want of the rum which used to make them "as talkative as forest Indians." Throughout all his journals there are affectionate references to Indians and métis alike. As early as his 1828 Report he was commenting favourably on two apprentice boys who were in his opinion "more fit for inland duty than any green hands out from Orkney, being more up to the ways of the country & know how to fish." On the desirability of hiring natives rather than Orcadians McKenzie was as convinced as his friend John McBean, but neither was able to influence Company policy.

It is obvious that part of McKenzie's sympathy for the métis grew out of his concern for his own family. Nowhere is his statement of injustice suffered as clear as in his letters concerning his son, Hector Aeneas. The Company always included the middle name to distinguish this young man from another Hector McKenzie, Nicol Finlayson's nephew, recruited in Scotland, whose rise in the Company service contrasted with the career of the young man from Lac Seul. Whatever the reasons for the difference, Charles McKenzie was acutely aware of

the racial ones. Hector Aeneas attended the Red River Academy, where his record was excellent; he was then admitted to the Company service as an apprentice postmaster, a rank devised for natives of the country who began at a lower level than most Scottish employees. He spent several years in the Mackenzie River district, rose to the rank of postmaster and saw his salary increase from £20 to £50 a year.<sup>53</sup> He was apparently dissatisfied with the service and considered leaving it several times before he made a permanent break in 1851.

In spite of the promotion and the increase in salary, there were indications that the Company was not entirely satisfied with his work. There were one or two complaints about the way his furs were packed,<sup>54</sup> and even praise for his skill with the violin and his entertaining stories about the Lac Seul Indians<sup>55</sup> could be variously interpreted; one of the charges of frivolity against his uncle Alexander William McKay was that he played the violin!<sup>56</sup> Far more serious was the report from Dr. John Rae whose exploring expedition Hector Aeneas accompanied for one season. At first Rae commended him as "very active and an excellent shot, much liked by the men whom he at the same time keeps in excellent order."<sup>57</sup> But later McKenzie was left behind at Bear Lake and did not accompany the expedition to the sea, as a punishment for "carelessness and inattention."<sup>58</sup> Nowhere was this statement amplified, so there is no means of evaluating the justice of Rae's action.

By this time Charles McKenzie was applauding his son's decision to leave the Company and set up a shop for himself in Red River,<sup>59</sup> but he was disappointed in the hope that Rae's recommendation would be of assistance there. Sadly he returned to the conviction he had expressed when his son had just left school — "It appears that the present concern has stamped the Cain mark upon all born in this country; neither education nor abilities serve them."<sup>60</sup> Apparently he believed that prejudice operated less outside the Company's service, and continued to hope for Hector's success in business, urging him to expand his holdings and offering him what financial assistance he could. The Company, meanwhile, permitted its ex-servant to draw fairly heavily upon it, aware that his father's credit balance would someday wipe out the son's indebtedness whether or not his business ventures lived up to promises.<sup>61</sup>

By the 1850's Charles McKenzie's letters frequently expressed concern about his approaching retirement. Although he had a piece of property at Red River he was reluctant to join his son and daughter there, partly because he had heard reports of the ruinous cost of living from some of his old friends,<sup>62</sup> partly because of his fear that his wife would not be happy. In this case, his fears were not based upon any discrimination she might encounter, but upon the loss of opportunities for hunting and fishing, and upon the inevitable change in diet. "Nothing but simple Indian fare for her, cooked in the simplest way — boiled fish and potatoes, no spices, but a little salt, of course."

Far more than testamentary dispositions to "my dearly beloved wife, Mary

McKay or McKenzie”<sup>63</sup> the letters and journals attest to a real affection. Mary seems to have been one of those women of mixed blood more oriented to her Indian than her European heritage, one of those characterized as “native” rather than “half-breed” in the records.<sup>64</sup> The Lac Seul journals give ample evidence of her skills and interests. At least from April, 1831 on, her husband was defending her actions against Company criticism. “She hunts for her own pleasure, & tho’ I pay her as I would an Indian out of the Company’s shop, she wastes more in wear & tear than she gets. The only profit I see by it is that she keeps herself in employment, her body in health.” Seven years later, McKenzie was boasting of her prowess, comparing her to some of the other women around the fort who did nothing but eat. Whereas some traders referred to their wives as squaws, sometimes without any intention of insulting them, McKenzie never used the term. Mary was Mrs. McKenzie, or “the guid wife” or “my rib” or “my better half”. Consistently he argued that she should be permitted to hunt if she wished, and that her hunting did not add materially to their joint income, and thus contravene Company policy. All she received from the stores was a little ammunition and a few unsaleable traps, he said. In any case, “she is so much her own mistress that she hunts from choice.”

In 1844 Mary McKenzie was left in charge at Lac Seul for the summer months, the first of six or seven such experiences. She may well have been the only native woman to have assumed such responsibility; the smallness of the post was no doubt a factor in her selection, as was the confidence her husband placed in her. In addition, there is some evidence that she was able to keep accounts, an unusual skill among native women of the time.<sup>65</sup> The first time she was left in charge Charles was worried, not that she would neglect anything but that the Indians might be troublesome in the face of novelty. But, as he reported on his return from Albany, “Instead of that none asked her a needle or a thread or a little twine to mend a net for nothing.” The next year she had to cope with an epidemic as well as the demanding Peter Jacobs. Charles returned to find her ill but refusing to rest and, in addition to her other work, caring for two sick Indian boys. In spite of everything, the shop was in better order than he had left it. By 1851 he was noting that the command was “a berth she do not covet” and the next year there was a division of labour, with Mary again in charge of the shop, and Hugh Folster supervising the outdoor work. Whether this arrangement was brought about by Mary’s distaste for part of the work or by orders from the Company was not made clear.

It is tempting to conclude from this evidence that long years of contemplation at Lac Seul had led Charles McKenzie to an acceptance of the equality of women, but he does not appear to have been so far ahead of his time. If he could be classified as a supporter of any liberation movement, it was one of Indians, not women. Mary as a person deserved and received his confidence; Mary’s Indian heritage he had come to respect and admire. But the role he assumed his



daughters would play was different from their mother's. Since their lives would be spent far from Lac Seul, he reverted, on most points, to traditional views of their place in society. When Julia and Margaret were at school, his hope was that they might learn "to fear God and make good housewives."<sup>66</sup> His long and discursive letter to Margaret in 1841 expressed the same values. He was pleased to hear that Margaret's husband was an excellent tradesman with a reputation for steadiness; he remained convinced that none of his daughters would bear hardships that their mother could. "They may be as good housewives within doors and, if so, their husbands will have less to complain of their lot."<sup>67</sup>

The youngest girl, always referred to as "poor Catherine" did not go to Red River to school until she was eighteen years of age,<sup>68</sup> but she had been taught to read the Bible and to write, after a fashion, before she went. Her spelling and handwriting, however, did not improve sufficiently to win the approval of either her father or her brother,<sup>69</sup> and it would appear that her long isolation at Lac Seul had made it more difficult for her to fit into another society. Her father reflected that his comparative poverty would count against her, since her classmates, daughters of Chief Factors, would be provided with larger dowries. News of Catherine's marriage to Thomas Cook, also of mixed blood, arrived just as her father was wondering whether or not he should give his consent. There was no indication that he was dissatisfied with either of the sons-in-law he had acquired. Indeed, in reference to the marital plans of an accomplished mixed-blood daughter of one of his friends, he made the revolutionary suggestion that she ought to be permitted to choose a husband without paternal intervention.<sup>70</sup> In his will, Charles McKenzie made provision for each of his children. The only distinction he made was that in his first will Margaret and in the second Catherine was enjoined that the legacy depended on good conduct. No such requirement was made of Hector Aeneas, nor, for that matter, of Mary, who was to receive the residue of the estate.

In his letter of resignation McKenzie asked that the Company provide him and his wife transport from Lac Seul to Red River, and that a pension be provided for himself, to be continued to his wife if she survived him.<sup>71</sup> Governor Simpson acceded to the first request, and promised to lay the matter of a £50 annual pension before the Council for their consideration.<sup>72</sup> There is no record of his having done so, but if any negative report reached Charles McKenzie in the last months of his life, he would scarcely have been surprised. Indeed, free transport to Red River was more than he expected.<sup>73</sup>

After McKenzie's departure, the post at Lac Seul continued to decline, and the only way out of it seemed to be death or retirement. It closed in the 1870's, only to be re-opened thirty years later as northwestern Ontario development entered a new era at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>74</sup> In the spring of 1855, however, when McKenzie's successor was pleading for a transfer because of ill health, Simpson's reply was definite. "You, of course, understand that you

quit on retirement from the Service; no other arrangement is possible to enable you to get away from Lac Seul."<sup>75</sup> By that time, the last of the McKenzies were at Red River, the widowed Mary living with her son Hector Aeneas.<sup>76</sup> For decades, Charles had maintained that "It does not require much to reconcile a civilized being to Indian life, but a mighty task to reconcile an Indian to civilized life and thinking."<sup>77</sup> The judgment probably remained as true for his widow as it had for himself. For their son, however, it was possible to identify with the developing Canadian west. The memories of his father's career and his father's bitterness would fade in time, along with those recollections of the Indians at Lac Seul and hunting on the Mackenzie River with which he used to entertain his friends.

Around Lac Seul itself the memory of a doughty Scot who had denounced Hudson's Bay Company power seems to have lingered in the folk memory. Many years later, when Alan Sullivan was describing the arduous journey north from Ignace, he included a vivid picture of a fictional Scot, Peter Anderson, "waiting at Lac Seul."<sup>78</sup> So reminiscent is this picture of the real Charles McKenzie that coincidence appears unlikely. The character of a man who remained so long at that post would not be completely forgotten in the next generation, and Sullivan's knowledge might well have come through Indian stories or, more probably, the memories of Anglican churchmen in the north. It did not come from McKenzie's journals; they, along with Governor Simpson's bitter commentary upon his foibles, remained inaccessible in the Company archives. But Simpson's low opinion of McKenzie's abilities was known among Company men in his time.<sup>79</sup> It would appear that a more sympathetic interpretation also existed in the memory of northerners.

No printed record of Charles McKenzie's experiences has ever appeared. Nineteenth century readers could never compare his judgments concerning Hudson's Bay Company policy with those of another dissident, John McLean, and it was possible for many to conclude that McLean's grievances were unique and personal. Indeed as late as 1932, when McLean's *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* was re-issued, W. S. Wallace noted as their chief defect "the author's somewhat atrabiliar attitude toward the Hudson's Bay Company, and in particular toward that great business executive, Sir George Simpson."<sup>80</sup> Certainly the separation of personal animus from observed fact represents one of the chief problems of any student of either memoirs. Moreover, remoteness from the councils where decisions were made (or Simpson's prearranged plans were slavishly accepted, if we are to believe McLean)<sup>81</sup> narrowed McKenzie's vision. What he saw in his inland post he recorded faithfully, but the general picture of the fur trade in North America was an abstraction he found it increasingly difficult to grasp. Even his disposition to blame individuals like Nicol Finlayson or William Sinclair rather than Company policy itself was a manifestation of the deleterious effect of isolation upon abstract thought.

In the study of the impressive business success of the Hudson's Bay Company under Simpson's leadership, it is necessary to see at what cost in human terms that this success was achieved. It is necessary to examine the failure, the obverse side of the medal, and this McKenzie's records permit us to do. In his journals appear the results of Company policy, however advantageous that policy may have been, upon a particular area — an area which sprang into prominence because of the rivalry of fur trading companies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and an area which, once that rivalry ceased, was left to its fate, in callous disregard of the irreversible effects upon the native people that a generation of the fur trade had produced. McKenzie had an increasing tendency to see both himself and Lac Seul as victims and, in a remarkable way, his frustration with bureaucratic decisions made hundreds of miles from the scene presages the reaction of northern Ontario to the southern ecumene a century later. Above all, the McKenzie record gives an unforgettable picture of the cynicism and ruthlessness with which Governor Simpson pursued his objectives. It is such accounts as this, not matter how atrabiliar, that are leading to a reassessment of the work of the "Little Emperor" and the values he represented.<sup>82</sup> L'homme seul, after all, was less isolated from the concerns of this century than he was from his own.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Masson, L. R. *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, v. 1, p. 317.
2. The precise relationship is unknown, but the series of letters to the Hon. Roderick Mackenzie make it clear that it was he who had secured Charles' appointment. The term "kinsman" in Charles' letters is reserved for members of that one family; in reference to others of the same name, no claim of kinship was advanced; see Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA) B-107-b-1, Charles McKenzie to Donald McKenzie at Rat Portage, March 6, 1847, in which the recipient of the letter was described as "a Gentleman and a Countryman, a namesake and an old Trader."
3. *Ibid.*, D-5-37, Charles McKenzie to Governor Simpson, May 6, 1853.
4. E. E. Rich's *History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870* (London, 1958) has no index entry for Lac Seul, nor is the place shown on the maps detailing the location of posts. In John S. Galbraith's *The Little Emperor* (Toronto, 1976) maps indicate that, for all his journeying, Sir George Simpson did not include Lac Seul on his itinerary.
5. Masson, v. 1, p. 328. This volume contains, pp. 327-93, "Mr. Charles McKenzie: The Missouri Indians, a Narrative of Four Trading Expeditions to the Missouri, 1804, 1805, 1806."
6. *Ibid.*, p. 317.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
8. HBCA B-107-a-30, Lac Seul Journal 1851-2, Doc. 8, 1851.
9. *Ibid.*, b-64-2-7 Escabitchewan Journal, Aug. 22, 1818. "Passed the NW house about midnight." Other entries in the journals for the next two years, especially June 2, 1820 and Sept. 4, 1820, identify the NW representative as Charles McKenzie.
10. Masson v. 1, p. 317.

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11. Campbell, M. W. *McGillivray, Lord of the Northwest* (Toronto, 1962) p. 198.
12. Masson, v. 1, p. 325. Charles McKenzie to Roderick Mackenzie, Nipigon, 1809, enclosed a specimen of the journal for approval, expressed gratitude for assistance in the past and hope for promotion in the future. Public Archives of Canada (PAC) MG 19 C 1 v. 33, Same to the Same, April 20, 1842, included an agreement to pay £100 toward the cost of publishing the journal.
13. PAC MG 19 B-2-33 L. R. Masson to Bishop Taché, Terrebonne, July 30, 1888, asked whether there was any information concerning the whereabouts of Charles' son, Hector Aeneas McKenzie, so that biographical details of his father's life might be included in the forthcoming publication.
14. Masson, v. 1, pp. 317-8.
15. HBCA D-5-37 Charles McKenzie to Simpson, May 6, 1853.
16. *Ibid*, B-107-a-12 Lac Seul Journal for 1822-3 begins with the statement that McKenzie had never before kept a journal at this place. (The only preceding one had been kept by the HBC in 1803-4). Unless otherwise stated, all future references will be to the appropriate volume of the journals and reports kept by McKenzie at Lac Seul over the years.
17. The records of the St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church show her baptism, marriage to Charles McKenzie, Gentleman, and the baptism of her youngest daughter, Catherine, all on March 6, 1824. These same records include the baptism of her brother, Alexander William McKay, on July 18, 1809 at the age of seven. His parents were identified as William McKay of Montreal, Esquire, and a woman of the Indian country. This established the connection with the NWCo. partner who left the Indian trade in 1807. The woman of the Indian country is also identified, since Charles McKenzie indicated that she became the country wife of John Haldane (PAC MG 19 A-21 (Series 1) v. 17, Charles McKenzie to James Hargrave, May 22, 1854). Sylvia Van Kirk in her thesis, "The economic and social role of Women in the fur trade" (University of London, 1975) p. 187, identifies Haldane's country wife as Josette Latour.
18. HBCA B-135-g-4 List of servants discharged, 1823. McKenzie's own reasons for leaving the service are detailed in a number of letters over the years. See, for example, PAC MG 19 A-44, correspondence with his wife's brother-in-law, Lt. Col. Philip Byrne, of Byrnaville, Lower Canada.
19. HBCA A-34, Servants' Characters, 1822-30.
20. PAC MG 19 A-44 Julia McKenzie to her parents, April 15, 1828.
21. HBCA D-5-3 Charles McKenzie to Governor Simpson, May 24, 1828; April 6, 1829; PAC MG 19 A-44, Philip Byrne to Charles McKenzie, April 12, 1828.
22. HBCA D-5-9 Margaret MacDonald to Governor Simpson, Kingston, Dec. 5, 1843 enclosed a lengthy letter from her father (Lac Seul, May 28, 1841) to support her request that the dividends from his shares in the City Bank of Montreal and the Bank of the Midland District of Upper Canada be paid to her. Wills of Charles McKenzie dated July 10, 1841 and July 6, 1849 are in HBCA A-36.
23. PAC MG 19 A-44 Alexander William McKay to Charles McKenzie, Sault Ste. Marie, May 16, 1855.
24. HBCA B-135-g-4 List of servants discharged, 1823, shows a credit balance of £420/4/3. This, along with wages due, seems to have been withdrawn in 1823.
25. *Ibid*, D-5-37, McKenzie to Simpson, May 6, 1853.

26. *Ibid*, B-107-e-4, Lac Seul Report, 1830-31.
27. PAC MG 19 A-44, Charles McKenzie to his son, Sept. 13, 1851. For McBean's relationship with Simpson, see Glyndwr Williams (ed.) *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg, 1975) p. 181.
28. *Ibid*, D-5-1 McKenzie to Simpson, Albany, June 28, 1826.
29. *Ibid*, A-34, Servants' Characters, 1822-30.
30. *Ibid*, A-32-2, Simpson's Character Book, item 53, published in Williams, p. 218.
31. *Ibid*, B-107-e-4 Lac Seul Report, 1830-31, Williams, p. 218, calls this entry "disarming self-criticism". Other interpretations appear possible.
32. *Ibid*, B-107-a-16 fo. 28d. Lac Seul Report, 1837-8, Cf. Dr. John McLoughlin's statement that Lac Seul produced 1800 packs of beaver in 1804 and not 1/100 of that amount a decade later. (B 105-a-9, Copy of letter to Simpson, Lac La Pluie, March 13, 1824).
33. *Ibid*, B-107-a-16, June 15, 1837 — 36 packs from Lac Seul plus 12 from the outpost at Sturgeon Lake (abandoned in 1837); B-107-a-17, June 10, 1838, 41½ packs from Lac Seul; B-107-a-20, June 13, 1841, 45 packs; b-107-a-26, June 10, 1849, 42¼ packs. Cf. 1840, 64 packs.
34. *Ibid*, A-34-2, Simpson's Character Book, item 53, published in Williams, p. 218.
35. Masson, v. 1, p. 320.
36. HBCA B-105-e-3 McLoughlin's report from Lac La Pluie, 1823-4; B-105-a-15, Cameron's journal entry, June 11, 1830.
37. *Ibid*, B-105-a-19, Lac La Pluie journal, June 1, 1834.
38. *Ibid*, B-107-b-1, Lac Seul correspondence, Charles McKenzie to Donald McKenzie, March 6, 1847.
39. *Ibid*, B-64-a-10, Escabitchewan journal 1823-4, includes a copy of Finlayson to Charles Ross, Sept. 1823, beginning, "I do not know whose fault this was . . ." McKenzie always knew whose fault it was.
40. *Ibid*, D-4-38 Simpson to McKenzie, Lac La Pluie, July 5, 1848, also D-5-22 Finlayson notation on McKenzie to Simpson, April 10, 1848.
41. *Ibid*, D-4-35, Simpson to Corcoran, Lachine, Dec. 10, 1846.
42. *Ibid*, D-5-26, McKenzie to Simpson, Dec. 28, 1849.
43. *Ibid*, D-4-32, Simpson to Corcoran, Encampment on Lake Huron, May 17, 1845.
44. Masson v. 1, pp. 319-20 has excerpts from some of the letters to Hon. Roderick Mackenzie.
45. *Ibid*, D-5-13 Corcoran to Simpson, Feb. 12, 1845 enclosing McKenzie to Corcoran, Dec. 26, 1844 and Jacobs to McKenzie, Aug. 27, 1844.
46. *Ibid*, B-107-a-24, Aug. 16 entry summarizes the events of the summer. Jacobs had arrived June 13 and disagreed frequently with Mrs. McKenzie. Charles then returned from Albany and entered the picture.
47. *Ibid*, D-4-32, Simpson to Corcoran, May 17, 1845. Council was to decide whether Jacobs could remain at Lac Seul but, in the meantime, he was entitled to support on the level of a commissioned officer, and quarters must be supplied, either in McKenzie's house or elsewhere. As it turned out, Jacobs himself decided to go back to Fort Frances, so the council had no decision to make.

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48. *Ibid*, B-107-a-31 Sept. 23, 1852. The Roman Catholic mission began about 1838, was abandoned in 1847, and the property later acquired by the Anglican church.
49. PAC MG 19 A-44 Charles McKenzie to his son, Sept. 12, 1851 refers to the marriage which had taken place on Aug. 24.
50. *Ibid*, B-107-e-3, Lac Seul report 1827.
51. PAC MG 19 A-44 Charles McKenzie to his son, May 1, 1854 discusses his own illness; Philip Byrne to Charles McKenzie, April 12, 1828 indicates that vaccination had not protected young Julia from smallpox.
52. HBCA B-211-a-4, Sturgeon Lake journal, Feb. 11 and Feb. 15, 1832. John McLean's *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (Toronto, 1932) p. 315 supports the view of medicine at the inland posts as it can be discovered from the Lac Seul journal. "The knowledge the Indians possess of the medicinal virtues of roots and herbs is generally equal to the cure of all their ailments; and we are, in fact, more frequently indebted to them, than they to us, for medical advice."
53. Oliver, E. H. (ed.) *The Canadian North-West* (Ottawa, 1915) v. II, Minutes of Northern Department, pp. 800, 817, and 836 give locations of Hector Aeneas McKenzie for the years 1840-2. HBCA B-239-g-81 shows him as an apprentice postmaster @ £20 p.a. with three years' service in 1841-2. He does not appear in the lists for 1843-4, and there is evidence that he may have left the service that year. He was again employed by 1847, if not earlier, and B-239-g-88 lists him as a postmaster @ £50 p.a. with a contract to 1850. There is no mention of him in B-239-g-90 (1850-51), although he was engaged that year by Dr. Rae, just as he was about to retire from the service for a second time. The next volume has his name written in (1851-2) then deleted and B-239-g-42 (1852-3) lists him unequivocally as a free man at Red River with an outstanding debt of £10.
54. HBCA D-4-35 Simpson to Hector Aeneas McKenzie, deals with 1846 furs.
55. Wordie, J. M. & R. J. Cyriax (eds.) *John Rae's Arctic Correspondence 1844-1855* (London, 195.) p. 364 Biography of Hector Aeneas McKenzie.
56. HBCA D-5-8 J. D. Cameron to Simpson, Aug. 25, 1843. McKay is leaving the service and is not much loss, as he is "a poor trader, a waster of goods, too fond of fiddling and dancing."
57. Wordie & Cyriax, p. 364.
58. *Ibid*, p. xcvi.
59. PAC MG 19 A-44, Charles McKenzie to his son, Sept. 12, 1851.
60. Masson, v. 1, pp. 318-9 cites excerpts from letters of Charles McKenzie to Hon. Roderick Mackenzie, undated, but internal evidence places them about the time Hector Aeneas was leaving school in 1838.
61. PAC MG 19 A-44 Duncan Finlayson to Hector Aeneas McKenzie, April 23, 1857 encloses accounts for 1856 showing a balance against Hector of £560/5/8 which is wiped off by the credit in favour of Charles McKenzie's estate (of which Finlayson and Hector were executors) of £1256/16/8. This letter is especially interesting in view of the fact that Charles McKenzie's will left most of his estate to his widow.
62. *Ibid*, Charles McKenzie to his son, Sept. 12, 1851.
63. HBCA A-36 Wills of Charles McKenzie, July 10, 1841 and July 6, 1849.
64. Van Kirk p. 205. This usage may explain Masson's mistake (v. 1, p. 318) in identifying Charles McKenzie's wife as an Indian woman.

65. It might be assumed that some record-keeping would be necessary at a post over a two-month period. In 1824, Mary McKay signed her marriage certificate with an X, but the letter from Philip Byrne to McKenzie, April 12, 1828 (PAC MG 19 A-44) refers to letters passing between their wives, who were sisters. Their brother, Alexander William McKay, had obviously received some education, served as a clerk to the HBC for some years, and conducted correspondence in a somewhat erratic fashion. Even more surprising than the suggestion that his sisters were able to write is the statement that their mother could also. PAC MG 19 A-21 (1) v. 17, Charles McKenzie to Hargrave, May 22, 1854 mentions his mother-in-law wrote him on January 22 and comments that not many ladies in Sault Ste. Marie could write.
66. *Ibid*, D-5-1 Charles McKenzie to Simpson, November, 1827.
67. *Ibid*, D-5-9 Charles McKenzie to Margaret MacDonald, May 28, 1841.
68. *Ibid*, B-107-a-19, Lac Seul Journal, Aug. 16, 1840 comments upon the age. (Catherine's baptismal certificate gives her birth date as December 26, 1821).
69. PAC MG 19 A-44 Charles McKenzie to his son, Sept. 12, 1851.
70. *Ibid*, Charles McKenzie to his son, May 1, 1854.
71. *Ibid*, D-5-37 Charles McKenzie to Simpson, May 6, 1853.
72. *Ibid*, D-4-46 Simpson to Charles McKenzie, Dec. 1, 1853.
73. PAC MG 19 A-44 Charles McKenzie to his son, May 1, 1854. It was a full year since McKenzie's request has been made and Simpson's reply written on Dec. 1, 1853, has not yet arrived at Lac Seul.
74. HBCA B-107-z-1 Lac Seul Miscellaneous contains a number of fragmentary accounts from the post-McKenzie era. By 1867, for example, new transport routes meant that at least some of the goods were being sent in from Lake Winnipeg. After a thirty-year interval with no HBC post at Lac Seul, there are records for the years 1902-09.
75. *Ibid*, D-4-50 Simpson to W. F. Lonsdell, June 26, 1855.
76. PAC MG 19 A-44 has a number of letters concerning the family. Isabella McKenzie to Hector McKenzie, Rossshire, May 14, 1857 refers to his mother's living in Red River. The disappearance of the Macdonalds has already been noted. It is also likely that Catherine died before her father. In Charles McKenzie to his son, Nov. 28, 1853, he refers to the receipt of several letters from Thomas Cook. "I shall always regard him as a son-in-law." By the time Masson got in touch with Hector for biographical details in 1888, he reported that all his three sisters were dead. So presumably was his mother, although he did not say so, or else Masson considered the point irrelevant to his work.
77. Masson, v. 1, p. 318.
78. Sullivan, Alan, *The Passing of Oul-i-but and Other Tales* (Toronto, 1913) is one of several collections including the short story "The Essence of a Man." The quotation is from p. 61; the description of Anderson appears pp. 62-4. Sullivan's knowledge of the north and, through his father the Bishop of Algoma, of Anglican activities in the north, is the basis for this inference.
79. Williams, *Hudson's Bay Miscellany*, pp. 156-66 stresses the secrecy surrounding Simpson's private notes written in 1832 on the character of Company employees, and cautions against uncritical acceptance of the views of a man physically ill and mentally harassed at the time of writing. Both these points, however, appear to apply only to the comments upon the Chief Traders and the Chief Factors. The evaluations of clerks like Charles McKenzie were virtual repetitions of what Simpson had written about them two years

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before, when neither of the conditions Williams mentions had prevailed. Moreover, Simpson did not hide his contempt for McKenzie and his personal letters showed his opinion clearly.

80. Wallace, W. S. (ed.) *John McLean's Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (Toronto, 1932) p. xxii. No mention of the original 1849 publication has been found in Charles McKenzie's letters or journals; unfortunately he did not seem to have been aware of it.

81. *Ibid*, p. 334.

82. See especially the works of Galbraith and Van Kirk, *op. cit.*

### Our Contributors

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## McKenzie

at AO, GS 4712); Hamilton Township (mf. at AO, GS 4752). PAC, RG 31, A1, 1851, Hamilton Township. St Peter's Anglican Church (Cobourg), Reg. of baptisms, marriages, and burials (mf. at AO). *Church*, 7 Dec. 1848. *Cobourg Star*, 24 Dec. 1845; 25 March, 24 June 1846; 20 May, 1, 8, 15 Sept. 1847; 19 Sept. 1849; 6, 13 Feb., 6 March 1850; 12, 26 March, 2, 9, 16, 23 July, 2 Oct. 1851; 18 Feb. 1852; 26 Jan., 16 Feb., 23 March, 6 April 1853. *Port Hope Commercial Advertiser* (Port Hope, [Ont.]), 14 May 1853. *Burke's peerage* (1970), 2148. W. H. Smith, *Canada: past, present and future*, vol. 2. E. C. Guillet, *Cobourg, 1798-1948* (Oshawa, Ont., 1948), 15, 28, 72, 252-53. G. A. Hallowell, "The reaction of the Upper Canadian Tories to the adversity of 1849: annexation and the British American League," *OH*, 62 (1970): 41-56.

**MCKENZIE, CHARLES**, fur trader; b. c. 1778 in Ferintosh, Scotland; m. some time before 1805, according to the custom of the country, and formally 6 March 1824 in Montreal, Mary McKay, a Métis, and they had one son and three daughters; d. 6 March 1855 in the Red River settlement (Man.).

Charles McKenzie was engaged as an apprentice clerk by McTavish, Frobisher and Company, one of the firms in the North West Company, for service in the fur trade by the terms of a contract signed in Montreal on 30 Dec. 1802. He proceeded in 1803 to the area around the Red and Assiniboine rivers where, in October 1804, NWC clerk Daniel Williams Harmon\* met him at Fort Montagne à la Bosse (near Routledge, Man.). McKenzie was serving as clerk under Charles Chaboillez\*, NWC partner in charge of the Fort Dauphin department, when on 11 November he was sent, with NWC clerk François-Antoine Larocque\* and others, to trade with the Mandan Indians on the upper Missouri River. The party reached the Gros Ventre (Hidatsa) Indians, close neighbours of the Mandans on the Missouri, by the end of November and, discovering four Hudson's Bay Company men among these Indians, Larocque left McKenzie and another man with them to compete with the English company's traders. McKenzie passed the winter with the Gros Ventres, and both he and Larocque, who stayed in a nearby village, were in close contact with the American exploration party under Meriwether Lewis and William Clark which was wintering among the Mandans. McKenzie returned to the Assiniboine River in the spring of 1805, arriving at Fort Assiniboine (Man.) with Larocque on 22 May.

He made three other trading expeditions to the Missouri in 1805-6 and he was with the Gros Ventres when Chaboillez and Alexander Henry\* visited the Mandans in the summer of 1806. McKenzie, who was at ease with the Indian way of life, was reproached by the two NWC proprietors for having adopted Indian dress. In his journal he wrote: "Let any man living with the Indians take the idea of 'Savage' from his

mind and he will find their dress much more convenient. He can pass through the crowd, day and night, without exciting curiosity or draw a throng of children and barking dogs"; furthermore, he noted, their dress was "very light and cool in the warm season."

The Missouri trade had been found unprofitable, and was discontinued by the NWC in 1807. McKenzie was posted to the Monontagué department, near Lake Nipigon, Upper Canada, under John HALDANE, where he took charge of the relatively unproductive post on Lac Seul. He remained at this post after the union of the NWC and the HBC in 1821, and, except for a brief period from 1823 to 1827, was there until his retirement in 1854. In 1823 he resigned from the HBC, discontented with his salary and other arrangements. He accepted a position with the king's posts but when it proved to be unsatisfactory he returned to the HBC.

The journals of his ventures to the Missouri River were forwarded to Roderick McKenzie\* of Terrebonne, Lower Canada, in 1842, and were eventually published in 1889-90. Those he kept at Lac Seul are more voluminous and more informative about his character. He was a strong advocate of Indian concerns, which often involved fur-trade policies he considered detrimental to their welfare; for example, he called the ready-barter system of trade "a most cold cold calculating system," because it prevented the Indians from obtaining in advance, on credit, the supplies upon which they had become dependent for hunting, trapping, and survival. He demonstrated a certain relativism towards Indian culture and he described, sometimes in detail, their hunting practices and other patterns of behaviour. He was very proud of his wife who had been raised as an Indian, and in his journal for 1831 he noted that "she hunts for her own pleasure, & tho' I pay her, as I would an Indian out of the Company's shop - wastes more in wear & tear than she gets & the only profit I see by it is she keeps herself in employment & her body in health." He also wrote extensively about events at the post, the habits of animals, and other natural phenomena. In the mid 1840s a series of epidemics killed many Lac Seul Indians and in August 1845, when the post was turned into a hospital, McKenzie himself became quite ill; his wife acted as nurse and comforter to the sick.

McKenzie remained a clerk until his retirement from the HBC, a fact that caused him much resentment. As early as 1827 Governor George SIMPSON had decided not to promote him, observing that "his best days are gone." McKenzie was convinced that promotions were based on favour and in November 1853 wrote to his son, Hector Aeneas, who had himself been in the service of the HBC from 1839 to 1851, that "if there was any merit I would be ahead of most of their present Chief Factors." In his

later years he suffered poor health, complaining of sore eyes and "decayed Bowels." Upon retirement he and his wife joined their son on his farm in the Red River settlement. McKenzie died there in 1855.

The record of McKenzie's long tenure at Lac Seul would indicate that he had managed the post well and had been generally liked by the Indians. The detailed and perceptive journals he kept during these years are his greatest contribution to history and science.

CHARLES A. BISHOP

The PAC has in MG 19, A44, a collection of letters exchanged between Charles McKenzie and his son as well as other members of the family for the years 1828-87. McKenzie's reports on the four expeditions to the Missouri River are published in "The Missouri Indians: a narrative of four trading expeditions to the Mississouri, 1804-1805-1806" in *Les bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Masson), 1: 315-93.

ANQ-M, CN1-29, 17 janv. 1800. PAM, HBCA, A.34/1: f.73; A.34/2: ff.38-38d; A.36/9: ff.186-87; A.44/3: 107; B.107/a/2, 6-31; B.107/b/1; B.107/d/1; B.107/e/3-5; B.107/z/1; Red River burial reg. Harmon, *Sixteen years in the Indian country* (Lamb). *New light on early hist. of greater northwest* (Coues). F.-A. Larocque, "The Missouri journal, 1804-1805," *Les bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 1: 297-313. C. A. Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the fur trade: an historical and ecological study* (Toronto and Montreal, 1974). [M.] E. Arthur, "Charles McKenzie, l'homme seul," *OH*, 70 (1978): 39-62.

**MCKENZIE, DONALD**, fur trader and colonial administrator; b. 16 June 1783 near Inverness, Scotland, son of Alexander and Catherine Mackenzie; d. 20 Jan. 1851 in Mayville, N. Y.

At age 17, after receiving a good education, Donald McKenzie immigrated to the Canadas to follow his brothers Roderick\*, Henry\*, and James\* into the fur trade. In March 1801 he became a clerk in the North West Company. Little is known of his experience with this company, but by 1809 he was disgruntled enough to contemplate switching to the rival Hudson's Bay Company, and he apparently collaborated with the ex-Nor'Wester Colin Robertson\* in the latter's scheme to lead an HBC expedition into the Athabasca country. When this plan failed, McKenzie was attracted to the new enterprise of John Jacob Astor\*, and in 1810, together with Ramsay CROOKS, Duncan McDougall\*, Alexander McKay\*, Wilson Price Hunt, and others, he became one of the original partners in the Pacific Fur Company. McKenzie's considerable strength, courage, and experience were severely tested when he assisted Hunt with the command of the overland expedition that set out for the mouth of the Columbia River that summer. The party had to split up in order to survive and, according to Gabriel Franchère\*, it was not until January 1812 that McKenzie and his men struggled into the newly

## McKenzie

constructed Fort Astoria (Astoria, Oreg.) "with their clothes in rags." During the next season, McKenzie began his extensive trading and exploring journeys into the interior. One of the major tributaries of the Willamette River was named after him; as he himself declared, "The west of the mountains have everywhere been chequered by my steps."

In 1813, upon learning of the outbreak of war between Great Britain and the United States, McKenzie played a significant role in persuading the other PFC partners that, because of the tenuous nature of their position on the Columbia, they would be better off selling out to the NWC rather than risk capture. Upon the completion of the transactions and the formal transfer of Astoria to British hands, McKenzie returned east with the NWC brigade in the spring of 1814, conveying the papers connected with the Columbia negotiations to Astor in New York. Astor, feeling that he had been betrayed, had no further use for McKenzie, but the NWC and the HBC both tried to lure him into their service. Apparently McKenzie had some sympathy for the HBC and the beleaguered Red River settlement (Man.) under the governorship of Miles Macdonell\*, but he cast his lot with the Nor'Westers and became a partner that year.

In the fall of 1816 McKenzie returned to the Columbia and for the next five years successfully managed the inland trade of the region, being primarily responsible for developing the arduous Snake River country expeditions. He gained a considerable reputation for being fearless and astute in his dealings with the turbulent tribes of the upper Columbia, and in 1818 he established Fort Nez Percés (Walla Walla, Wash.). With the union of the HBC and the NWC in 1821, he was made a chief factor in the HBC. On coming out to the annual meeting of the Council of the Northern Department at York Factory (Man.) the next year, the seasoned veteran had some thoughts of retirement. Instead, in the fall of 1822, with John ROWAND as his assistant, he was given charge of a large expedition to investigate the prospects of extending the HBC's trade south into the regions of the Bow and the South Saskatchewan rivers to check American competition.

Although the Bow River expedition demonstrated that trade in the region would not be profitable, McKenzie so impressed HBC governor George SIMPSON that he was sent in the fall of 1823 to restore order to the company's affairs in the Red River settlement after the removal of John CLARKE. The following year Simpson described him as "the fittest man in the Country for the Situation," being "a cool determined man, Conciliatory in his manners, economical & regular and privately attached to the Colony." McKenzie's heavy financial losses, resulting from the bankruptcy of McGillivray, Thain and Company [see Thomas Thain\*], contributed to his

The Story of Drarned Mac Iurl, a renowned Chief among  
the Fingallians, his Amour with Gwina Nic (Witch) and  
their magical death -

No hero was greater, among the Fingallians,  
Than Drarned the Gallant, & in fanght more valiant;  
He had for misfortune - a Bal-shuc\* in his face,  
Which Charmed each Fair one, and ruin'd their Grace.

Returning one day from the Chase, being worn,  
He raised his Helmet, not thinking of harm,  
Which Gwina had seen; she was Fingal's fair wife,  
Love struck her at sight; but it cost both their life

She, fearing that Fingal, would know how things stood,  
Persuaded her Gallant, to fly to some wood,  
And there in full safety, enjoy their Amour,  
Till the tempest was over, from Fingal secure.

But the tempest was brewing in Fingal's own breast,  
He meditates long, with himself what was best,  
He proposed a Chase, to run a wild Deer,  
Well knowing that Drarned, could not hear and forego.

I'm first in the Bullie, & I'm first in the Chase,  
Much swifter of foot, than a Deer in the Race;  
Nor other Fingallian, before him drew blood,  
No Enemy on Morven, before him withstood.

Gwina then said "Drarned had not seen this Chase,  
'Tis a faint of Mac Donil: to Ruin our Grace;  
"When Tyrants so jealous, lament their flown wives,  
"Ye Gallants, beware, have a Guard on your lives!

\* A talisman or Charm. Drarned had in his forehead which obliged him to wear  
his Helmet - on his face - for fear of having all the Fair at his heels - which Gwina Gallantly  
perhaps, would not consider a misfortune -

"For love of my Dear'd, I have sacrific'd all,  
"Disgrac'd my own Sex, dishonour'd Fingal";  
"None why would'it I should leave me, to pine for thy loss,  
"Where'er they will lay thee, I'll die on thy Corpse! -

"I fear not the Dart, from Fingal's bloody arm,  
"Whose oft' was stain'd in fair Bergrin's blood warm!"  
"Oh! say not so - Guina! - the most noble of man -  
"To Fin - Mor Mac Doull - Great King of his Clan -  
"Protector of Bergrins - Avenger of Wrong,  
"From Clus - Sgethi\* to Svehlin - he governs the throne;  
"The Stay of the Widow - Successor to the daughter;  
"His Arms he uses, the Monsters to slay here!"

"I'll follow my Dear'd, o'er Mountain and Moor,  
"The moment thou fall'st, shall be my last hour;  
"To leave thy fo'loer in this forest wood,  
"Sworn bitter my Grave will that deep torrent flood."

"Fair Guina my love, for thy Dear'd don't fear,  
"Whilst he holds his broad shield, and handles the spear;  
"He defies the Fingallians - let them come man by man,  
"I brave the most valiant in all Fingal's Clan! -

"Should Dear'd have hid him from this noble Chance?  
"To the Lane of the swiftest, belongs the first place,  
"Sure Fingal would think, I durst not show my face;  
"Wouldst thou then, thy Lover, be brought to disgrace? -

"I will hit to the Chase, myself and my hounds;  
"The Fingallian, may like, to look sullen and proud -  
"I'll show my Guina, the Choice she has made,  
"Was worthy her hand, whether living or dead.  
"To my Lane is reserved this mighty Lord. Fin†  
"No other before me durst make him his prey."

\* The Isle of Sky - & Sardin - † With Bone -

He said, and stood up, like a lusty tall Oak,  
A stave Confid, on pillars of Rock;  
Two noble white Hounds, proudly follow'd the Chief,  
The Den of their Mountain, oft addm'd their Teth.

The Boar was the largest, e'er seen o'er Morbin:  
When he heard the Fingallians, he made for Pen-Quil-bin,\*  
The Dogs, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~silenc'd~~ <sup>silenc'd</sup> ~~drap~~ <sup>drap</sup> mouth'd each, at his heels;  
The boldest, most forward, his enormous Tusks feels.

Clad in movable Quills, a poison'd Cuirass,  
Which he shook from his sides, on those in his Pass,  
Would resist the best Steel, from more feeble hands;  
But what could resist, the Fingallian band?

Each Tusk in his head, was a yard in full length,  
The flame of a furnace, scorch'd less than his breath;  
He vomited fire, both from mouth and his eyes;  
The smoke from his nostrils, had darkn'd the Skies.

He stood on his feet, full eighteen foot high  
No wonder Fingallian alone, could come nigh;  
No Lion of Sybin. No Hydra of Lernan,  
Could equal this Monster, of North Caledon:

The Chase sweep'd along, o'er Moor and O'er Moap,  
He stoop'd not to Parley - Grain-Chaillach to Cropp: †  
Being foild in his Purpose - the Duth-Chuille †† Gain;  
He turn'd on his track to his old haunts again.

Three times he makes head, and threatens his foe;  
As often he's baffl'd, and feels a frisk dose,  
The sound of the Bow-stony, is heard from a far,  
Of which he makes light, as if Arrows were straw.

\* A mountain of that name - † A Gape, between 2 mountains - when old women - i. e. Witches  
are wont to practice, the art of jumping - †† a forest in the County -

Out to the Sharp Lance, so enormous in length,  
And sent without erring, by Herculean strength;  
Tho' hundreds were broken, that day in the strife  
A few basted large, of the vitals of life

'Twas clear that the monster was failing in power,  
He slackens his pace, but more dreadful he lowers;  
The flower of their dogs, had now lag'd behind,  
By his Fusts they were scotch'd, by his Quills were blind.

And many bold Gail, by the same was affected;  
But Fingal more prudent than Ardour, he checked,  
Commanded to March, in two Columns, close rank,  
In order to strike, both his right and left flank.

At length in despair, and deep desperation,  
He faced in fury, the Fingalian nation,  
That Phalaris of Heroes, with Sunn in their hands;  
Sincerely were able, his first onset withstand.

But finding a welcome, he little expected,  
The loss of his blood, his fury had checked  
He thought it most prudent, to trust to his heels,  
And gain, if he could, to the top of the hills.

Bold Dearmid impatient of prudent delay  
And wishing the honour the monster to slay,  
Sprung out of the rank in an instant his Dart,  
In the side of the monster is sunk thro' the heart.

He'd brought to the earth the tremendous Boar!  
And yields up his blood in torrent of Gore;  
The Fingalians send up a drapring Hurra!  
Which Echoes return from each Cavern and Carn.

Yet struggles with death, tho' his body was pierc'd,  
And smit'd, as if nail'd, by Sunes to the earth,  
Still he rolls for life, on the saturate sword;  
'Till his neck was despoil'd, by Dearnard's broad sword.

He's down - 'tis done - the Fingallians then shout,  
By the hand of MacIur! - "To whom else would he stoop?  
"Bold Dearnard, thou provide thyself as of yore,  
"Hide not thy Bul-shine, from our Fair any more."

But Fingal was wroth, sullen silent he stood;  
His friends were alarm'd, lest on evil he broods,  
And not without cause - by Dearnard's fresh glory,  
His own serm'd lepid - a stain on his proupp.

His Rival that <sup>expressing</sup> had shown much Contempt,  
By appearing before him so early and prompt  
Broke thro' his strict orders, which those in Command  
Can never forgive - a King can't withstand

Swatkin'd at length from his dark Meditations,  
Said "Dearest thou art, the man of thy Nation;  
"To the boldest in war, belongs the first Station;  
"All else are <sup>but</sup> Abortions - the drop of Criticism."

"Now rise, and Measur out the Bear that we may see  
"From snout to heel, how many feet the Monster be"  
Bear-foot, he did, and strange, he Meas'd Thirty-two!  
Fresh praise was lavish'd - but which was Dearnard's due.

Fingal said, "Nite once more, from tip of tail to snout,  
"I'd have him measure fair, to end our inward doubt;  
"I gift thee with the sharpest Lance among any thousands spears,  
"None is worthy such Lance, who dreads death or fears."

Then Deamud arose with his heart void of Guilt  
The brave often fall, by the Crafty in wile  
As he Met'd the Boar 'gainst the Poisonous Quills  
The most ven'ous of all Sinks deep in his wile

Alas! - but too late, felt the venomous dart;  
But begg'd of Fingal, to Cure his Death's Smart  
But Fingal looks proudly and was the more cool  
And <sup>said</sup> he would die "The death of a Fool".

Then sounded a March, quite Calm as unfurling,  
Which shows a just Part, that becomes a great King;  
The Fingallians follow'd, none dare rest behind  
Yet to leave the bold hero, was left to their mind

That brave, but an hour, was the pride of his Clan,  
Now left on the Moor, without friend, or a man!  
Save his two noble Dogs, who howl, on his shield,  
By the side of their master, they'll die on the field.

This was more Cruel, than the Poison to bear,  
And he look'd for his Arms, his Bowels to bear;  
But his friends had taken his Sword and his Lance,  
In case on his life, he'd attempt, by mischance.

No Bulls could bellow, Enrag'd at each other;  
And Echoes resounded, from each Mountain together,  
E'en pitying Nature put on a dark Cloud,  
To mourn a bold Son - to own might be proud.

He tears his own hair, he tears up the Rocks,  
Large fragments of Rock - he Counts, light as Feathers,  
Down the Mountain he hurls, to a watery bed,  
By so Patient a hand, dash'd in thousand small Shreds.

His ponderous strength, was now much exhausted,  
The noblest parts by the poison affeted,  
Inflamed his blood - fermented the marrow:  
He calls upon death - to end pain and sorrow.

Being now more calm, of fair Graina he thinks,  
To bring him some liquor - some water to drink;  
She heard his first call, was at a short distance,  
But alas! - ere she reach'd - he is past all assistance !!!

"And art thou thus fallen, mighty Deornd Mac Iud!  
"By wily old Fingal, a tyrant most cruel;  
"Alas! thou madest light of my counsel this morn:  
"That durst for thy honour, which now I must mourn!

"But faithful to Deornd, I'll lay on thy Coar,  
"Tho' false to old Fingal, I'll die for thy lair;  
"My two faithful Dogs, and Graina thy Bride,  
"Most happy to die by my Hero's fair Side!!"

The last verse of the Tradition - Proves the tale true - & goes thus -

1002  
"Crathra Dh'fay Sinn anse a'n Tulach,\*  
"N' abhair na Muic a' fhiadaich,  
"Graina Ghal, n' i gin Ragh Mhic Mhuirich,  
"N' dha Ghalu Chuilrin - agus Deornd!"

\*  
A Mount - Emmanu - In scripture "Tulach namh a' Dh'i" is  
God's holy Mount! -

Post-Script



Thus fell noble Dearmid, a Dog on Each Side,  
And Grainá Níe Dúrich, his (Solicit) fair Bride;  
Their Tomb is still seen - 'tis that Tulloch-drummed;  
And was they not Burn'd, by Slioc Mhuach Rábhach?  
You'll find Tulloch-drummed, south-east Ach-na-crach;  
Belonging of Gore to Chlann Mhuach Rábhach,  
For Claidh-mor, agus Biddag, so famous in Story,  
And for keeping their word - not less to their Glory.

But Alas! - they are scatter'd - far wide and abroad:  
And I fear that the best are now under the sod! -  
But still were they gather'd, each spout and each scion,  
They'd shew you some Gails! - would not bear contradiction -

I'll name you a "pat'arch - please God he's not gone!  
He can shew you such youths - the pride of Torr-bonne:  
These are, in straight line, from the Great Mhuach-mor,  
So renown'd among Chlan Choinnich in days of Gore.

If the Cause was a good one, they'd lag not behind  
They would settle a Troop, when not to their mind  
As their Ancestors did - with their drawn broad sword  
- the point of the Biddag - no palavering words -

Fair Grainá's morning Counsel to Dearmid & his Answer - or the  
beginning of the old song - the origin of the above story -

"A Dearmid este a dinge a 'n fhuidh,  
"O'n Cintrach gur fhuidh bhronn i,  
"Na fo'ir Coirdaidh do Mhuach Duil,  
"O'n shr Carnhadh bhíogh gur Chreil -"

'A Grainá, nach fhan i' Sainkrach,  
'Tua fo'ir Fainá da do Chreil;  
'Cha b'iginn mo Chuidh do'n 'Fshreily diom,  
'Air sgath fheirgh a fhir na Fhírmne -'

Charles McKenzie

MCKENZIE, Charles

The Story of Dearmed MacJurl a renowned Chief among the Fingallions. His Amour with Graina NicUvich and their Tragical death.

No hero was greater, among the Fingallions,  
Than Dearmed the Gallant, e'er fought more valiant;  
He had for misfortune - a Bal-Shuc<sup>+</sup> IN HIS FACE,  
Which charmed each Fair one, and ruined their peace.

Returning one day from the chase, being warm,  
He raised his Helmet, not thinking of harm;  
Which Graina had seen ( She was Fingal's fair wife )  
Love Struck her at sight; but it cost both their life.

She, fearing that Fingal would know how things stood,  
Persuaded her gallant, to fly to some wood,  
And there in full safty, enjoy their Amour,  
Till the tempest was over, from Fingal secure.

But the tempest was brewing in Fingal's own breast,  
He meditates long, with himself what was best:  
He proposed a chace, to run a wild Boar,  
Well knowing that Dearmed could not hear and f

E'er first in the Battle, e'er first in the chace,  
Much swifter of fool, than a Deer in the race;  
No other Fingallian, before him drew blood,  
No enemy on Morvin, before him withstood.

Graina then said "Dearmed heed not thee this chace,  
'Tis a faint of Mac Donil: to ruin our oease;  
When Tyrants so jealous, lament their flown wives,  
Ye Gallants, beware, have a guard on your lives!

For love of my Dearmed, I have sacrific'd all,  
Disgrac'd my own sex, dishonour'd Fingal:  
Now why would it thou leave me, to pine for thy loss,  
Where'er they will lay thee, I'll die on thy corse!

+ A talisman or charm. Dearmed had in his forehead which obliged him to wear his helmet over his face for fear of having all the Fair at his heels - which modern Gallants, perhaps, would not consider a misfortune.

landscape painting's foreground scene of human habitation, however dense the background forest and however steep the background cliffs might be. Some of the forest is cleared and Tolmie, by quoting from As You Like It (II.v.i),<sup>11</sup> imaginatively invests the pine forest with the Arcadian qualities of the "greenwood tree." Apparently, he recognizes that he is making a place out of wilderness space, for he alludes here to another instance of art transforming a scene of banishment into a new Arcadia--Amiens' song, sung in the Forest of Arden. The selection and shaping of the site is a creative act. The transformation of the terrain into landscape by means of human labour is likened implicitly to the landscape painter's imaginative representation of natural elements in a landscape painting, and is likened tangentially to the process of written landscape creation.

Like Tolmie's narrative, Samuel Black's was not composed with a view towards publication. It records an herculean canoe trip made in 1824 up the Finlay River to the northern reaches of the interior of British Columbia. Despite encountering a remarkable succession of dangers on his route, Black (1785-1841) records a wealth of observations about a world unknown to white men. "Few details of any kind," notes R.M. Patterson,

escaped Black's seeing eye and no detail was too small to be recorded. The amazing vitality of the man leaps to the fore when one recollects that all this was set down day by day, often by the light of the camp fire, sometimes on the summit of a mountain in a bitter wind, and always under the strain of a tremendous feat of physical endurance.<sup>12</sup>

Travelling upriver through the Rocky Mountain Trench and then into the Cassiar Range, Black was of course unlikely to meet with picturesque landscapes; indeed, the other aesthetic of the day--the Sublime--which Englishmen deployed less to describe their own country than Switzerland and France, dominates his narrative. For example, a momentarily picturesque illusion appears in the protean landscape during the spring run-off in the first week of June, and Black permits it to steal

into his fancy; however, the effect produced is not reposed contentedness but, rather, a virtual aesthetic vertigo:

In a fine evening from the top of the hill we have something here of a fine prospect ending in a vast & unbounded extent The flat woody borders of the valley penetrating the lake in alternate points contrasted with the opening Lake, & the Eye divested of the Rugged black Rocks & the undetermined snowy shades & the somber shade of night casting its thin Mantle over light & shade & lastly the serene harmony of the whole may approach the beautiful & sublime, but raise the Eye to the bold features of the black Rugged Rocky cliffs & crags rising over this terrific end of the Lake resembling huge masses of majestic shade contrasted with the Gloomy Hollow & deep blue expanse [sic] of the Lake & we have a true resemblance of the Grand & Terrific. (pp. 79-80)

In the middle ground and near-background of this scene at Lake Thutade, one of the headwaters of the Mackenzie River, the landscape distinguishes the Picturesque (here, Black's "serene harmony of . . . the beautiful & sublime") in calm twilight. However, as is inevitable in the Cassiar district, an entire and apparently foreign vastness towers above the picturesque, horizontal scene of wood and water in a granitic crescendo whose vertical drama entralls the viewer and defies his composition of a discreet pen picture. As if requiring at once the gentle moods of Claude Lorrain's tonal harmony as well as the tremendous clamour of Salvator Rosa's sublime canvases of alpine nature, the Canadian landscape bursts the bounds of Black's careful aesthetic distinctions. Not incidentally, almost a complete abandonment of grammar is needed for the narrative depiction to capture a mood of titanic and indomitable natural power.

Yet, such sublimity never quite subdues the Briton's urge to seek the Picturesque, although Black was not to find a true version of it on this expedition. On 14 July, his small party crossed into the Stikine watershed. On July 20, Black was presented with another picturesque illusion, an apparent parkland that enchants him from a distance but that does not bear up under closer scrutiny:

. . . we have an extensive view of fine smooth sloping Mountains, some topped [sic] with broken strata of Rock & tumulus; intersected with green Vallies some of them covered with dwarf Pines varigated wt [with] Copses of Furz, brush wood & shrubbery willow &c & altogether a fine distant prospect:--but in practice alas how fallacious, for in place of Arcadian plains and dianas Groves & fountains, we walk in Neptune's Regions always wet & often sinking in the oozie Bottom amongst aquatic Vegetables & Flours little grassy hillocks, mud & slime, such are the fine bare Mountains here to the very top amongst Patches of snow & such. . . . (pp. 126-27)

The early-summer run-off floods the valley and rather bitterly disappoints Black the aesthetician because it destroys a potentially darling picturesque illusion; but it also disappoints Black the fur trader because such submerged terrain will have destroyed any inducement that beavers--only the slightest signs of which he would see throughout his voyage--may have had to take up residence in it. His response to the height of land's aesthetic potential is as evocative in another passage that describes a similar parkland prospect, reached by foot on 22 July:

The opening view of this valley at the other end is very fine & picturesque, the smooth & sloping varigated mountains spreading out on both sides & the end of the valley crossed by a Barrier of high Rocks rising in fanciful forms, we are now camped near, but the valley and sides of the mountain as usual is soaked in snow water & from the number of knotty tufts of matted Grass & Moss Roots, the Canadians call Tetes de fammes is fatiguing to walk in & mars the pleasures we would otherwise enjoy in the sequestered beauties occasionally presenting themselves in these horrid desolations of Gods creation. (pp. 130-31)

These two "views" constitute a sort of aesthetic torture for Black: they fascinate him even while repelling either aesthetic appreciation or even penetration (except by strenuous exertion, which hardly accords with the mood of a parkland setting). The sole consolations for the landscape enthusiast and fur trader alike are that the "horrid desolations" have receded briefly, and that the terrain abounds with game, if not beaver. Thus, Black follows the second description with another on the subsequent "Reindeer" (caribou) hunt through the sodden natural estate grounds. The hunt furnishes a sensation pleasant enough to a brigade whose diet had been confined for some days to marmot and ground squirrels. As

well, the sport can be enjoyed in a valley where the horizontal aspect of natural landforms resumes a place in the topography, however briefly. And yet, the entire fortuity with which the landscape and the game are encountered, and the degree of illusion required to compose the terrain into "dianas Groves & fountains" alert Black to the fact that none of the modes of landscape perception known to him through experience or literature accurately represents the character of the region he was discovering.

Thomas Simpson (1808-1840), cousin to Governor Simpson and a Master's graduate from Edinburgh, completed the survey of the northern continental coastline with Peter Warren Dease between 1836 and 1839. Unpossessed himself of much aesthetic regard for nature--he states at the outset of his Narrative that "In the wilderness time and space seem equally a blank, and for the same reason[:] the paucity of objects to mark or diversify their passage. . ." <sup>13</sup>--his journal treats landscapes aesthetically only when describing scenes that John Franklin had pictured in his Narrative of a second expedition (1828), and that George Back had penned or sketched in his Narrative of the arctic land expedition (1836). Travel literature begets travel literature. On 20 August 1839, for example, Simpson verifies his whereabouts not only by astronomical calculation but also by reference to a drawing that George Back had made of the coastline of Chantrey Inlet five years before: "Far in the southeast, Victoria Headland stood out; so boldly defined that, even without the help of the chart, we should have instantly recognised it from Back's exquisite drawing" (II, 372). <sup>14</sup>

Simpson is aesthetically silent while passing through lands not mentioned by Franklin or Back, but when he does have their textual or artistic precedents as guide-books he excels. Returning to the Mackenzie Delta from Point Barrow on

12 August 1837, he rejoices at the reappearance as background of the northernmost Rocky Mountains:

It was now 3 P.M.; and, incited by the beauty of the weather, I ascended the nearest hill, six or seven miles distant, whence I enjoyed a truly sublime prospect. On either hand arose the British and Buckland Mountains, exhibiting an infinite diversity of shade and form; in front lay the blue boundless ocean strongly contrasted with its broad glittering girdle of ice; beneath yawned ravines a thousand feet in depth, through which brawled and sparkled the clear alpine streams; while the sun, still high in the west, shed his softened beams through a rich veil of saffron-coloured clouds that overcanopied the gorgeous scene. Bands of reindeer, browsing on the rich pasture in the valleys and along the brooks, imparted life and animation to the picture. Reluctantly I returned to the camp at sunset. (I, 178-79)

The elevated prospect provides a limitless view, which must be regarded as sublimely vast, but many elements of the Picturesque abound as well. Apparently recalling Franklin's view of the Beaufort Sea from Garry Island almost precisely twelve years before,<sup>15</sup> Simpson, who would have been following Franklin's journal for obvious navigational reasons, and who alludes to it throughout this segment of his journal, intently seeks a view like Franklin's, that is to say, a sublime panorama featuring picturesque elements. Where seals and whales animated Franklin's sunset view, reindeer enliven Simpson's. The Hudson's Bay Company officer also deploys the device established first in verse by James Thomson (The Seasons [1744]), of describing a scene in one verse or prose sentence, a stylistic device found throughout Franklin's landscape responses. Simpson's sentence beginning, "On either hand . . .," blocks in the mountain ranges as the coulisses (literally, the curtains hung in the wings of a theatrical stage) framing his picture, the ocean as middle ground, the ice as background, the animated rivers and cariboux as the foreground, and the colouring of the whole scene by a sunset glow that the Franco-Italian painter, Claude Lorrain, had made de rigueur in picturesque landscape painting. But Simpson's inclusion of "a rich veil of saffron-coloured clouds" extends the view even farther

than Franklin's in that its hint of Eastern exoticism suggests the extension of the vision "in the west" to the veils and saffron of the East, the rich silk and spice trade of Cathay. As much as or perhaps even more than an Admiralty explorer, a trader would cast an attentive eye on such visions, and would delight in the discovery of a navigable Northwest Passage for the commercial prospects it would open.

John McLean (1799-1890) spent three full years prior to his posting to Ungava in the interior of New Caledonia. In his Notes of a twenty-five year's service in the Hudson's Bay territory (1849), the picturesque enchantment that he found at Forts St. James and Alexandria structurally foreshadows the later chapters in which the sublimity of his posting at Fort Chimo provides the narrative's climax.

Arriving at Fort St. James, at the bottom of Stuart Lake, on 28 October 1833, McLean was delighted with the lacustrine beauties offered from its location:

Fort St. James, the depôt of New Caledonia district stands near the outlet of Stuart's Lake, and commands a splendid view of the surrounding country. The lake is about fifty miles in length, and from three to four miles in breadth, stretching away to the north and north-east for about twenty miles; the view from the Fort embraces nearly the whole of this section of it, which is studded with beautiful islands. The western shore is low, and indented by a number of small bays formed by wooded points projecting into the lake, the back-ground rising abruptly into a ridge of hills of varied height and magnitude. On the east the view is limited to a range of two or three miles, by the intervention of a high promontory, from which the eye glances to the snowy summits of the Rocky Mountains in the distant back-ground. I do not know that I have seen anything to compare with this charming prospect in any other part of the country; its beauties struck me even at this season of the year, when nature having partly assumed her hybernal dress, everything appeared to so much greater disadvantage.<sup>16</sup>

The elongation of the second sentence mimics the movement of the eye from the lake to the distant mountains. Before concluding, it continues on to encompass that feature in the lake which diversifies its view--the islands. Thus, after the semi-colon, the sentence records what the eye notices on returning from the background.



Then, the next two sentences sketch in the foregrounds and backgrounds of the twin views to the west and east which frame the view up Stuart Lake. Finally, the paragraph and picture conclude with what was lacking in the mere notes made en route to New Caledonia: the writer's remarks on how the view affects him. He judges it exceptional for its charm, despite the season.

This single example must stand for many that occur in the New Caledonia segment of McLean's Notes. By 11 September 1837, McLean found himself on the other side of the continent, and in a world whose pictures were completed not by landscape variety but by singularity: Fort Chimo, at the bottom of Ungava Bay, was, in McLean's view "surrounded by a country that presents as complete a picture of desolation as can be imagined; moss-covered rocks without vegetation and without verdure, constitute the cheerless landscape that greets the eye in every direction" (I, 210). The change is sublimely ferocious; the effect on this landscape enthusiast palpable, as he find himself jettisoned from a seemingly prelapsarian world to a postlapsarian realm. "The eye turns away in disgust from the cheerless prospect which the desolate flats present" (II, 211).

Vacant space frustrates the fur trader no less than the explorer or traveller, especially one as well versed in literature as McLean was reputed to be:<sup>17</sup> it offers nothing upon which to build an enthusiastic economic or aesthetic prospect. Furthermore, year-round residency, as opposed to the landscape traveller's or the explorer's seasonal and often brief visit to a sublime terrain, clearly threatens the fur trader's sense of identity. Only extremes of nature seem to exist. McLean writes from Fort Chimo with intentional irony:

At this period [winter] I have neither seen, read, nor heard of any locality under heaven that can offer a more cheerless abode to civilized man than Ungava. The rumbling noise created by the ice, when driven to and fro by the force of the tide, continually stuns the ear; while the light of heaven

is hidden by the fog that hangs in the air, shrouding everything in the gloom of a dark twilight. If Pluto should leave his own gloomy mansion in tenebris tartari, he might take up his abode here, and gain or lose but little by the exchange.

"The parched ground burns frore, and cold performs  
The effect of fire"--Milton

When the river sets fast, the beauties of the winter scene are disclosed--one continuous surface of glaring snow, with here and there a clump of dwarf pine, or the bald summits of barren hills, from which the violence of the winter storms sweep away even the tenacious lichens. The winter storms are the most violent I ever experienced, sweeping everything before them; . . . (II, 249)

Unable to relate the appearance of Ungava to any other terrestrial scene (except by ironically deploying such vocabulary of the Picturesque as "beauties," "here and there," and "clump," in the second paragraph), McLean resorts conventionally to scenes of Hell as described in Roman mythology, and in the second book of Milton's Paradise Lost (l. 594). The Miltonic allusion is altered from the original "parching Air," to the "parched ground," the effect of which focusses the reader's attention on the analogy between the visual aspects of Hell and of Ungava.

Milton's verse occurs in his description of the "frozen Continent" (Bk. II, 588), lying beyond the river Lethe in Hell. Thus, McLean identifies his banishment from landscape appreciation with Milton's haunt for exiles, which is described by the poet thus:

Beyond this flood a frozen Continent  
Lies dark, and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind and dire Hail, which of the firm land  
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems  
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,

where

the parching Air  
Burns frore, and cold performs th'effect of Fire.  
Thither by harpy-footed Furies hal'd,  
At certain revolutions all the damn'd  
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change  
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,

From beds of raging Fire to starve in Ice  
 Thir soft Ethereal warmth, and there to pine  
 Immovable, infixt, and frozen round,  
 Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire,  
 They ferry over this Lethean Sound  
 Both to and fro, thir sorrow to augment . . . . 18

Besides the "dark and wild" aspects of Milton's scene which itself might well have been based on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century travel narratives about the Canadian north,<sup>19</sup> McLean's scene, also apparently hidden from the light of heaven, is likewise full of heaped ice which "thaws not," moving to and fro before him on the tidal Koksoak River. That McLean considered himself unjustly denied preferment and advancement by George Simpson, the chief of the Hudson's Bay Company's "harpy-footed Furies," is explicit in several passages (II, 234-35), and appears to be adumbrated in his selection of Miltonic allusion. "Consigned to [his] fate" (McLean, II, 238) in desolate exile at Fort Chimo, McLean's only regular communication with the outside world was by means of the Hudson's Bay Company brig, which ferried supplies "every alternate year" (McLean, II, 238), that is to say, "at certain revolutions" (Milton), augmenting the torture of the posting, in so far as the provisions delivered never sufficed to support successful habitation or commerce. Thus, like the Lethean ferry, the brig only prolonged what McLean considered at the time, and history proved to be, a fruitless venture into an unearthly dominion.

McLean appears to have imagined that Milton had Ungava in mind when describing the atmospheric tortures--"the bitter change / Of fierce extremes"--in the frozen Continent: immediately preceding the Miltonic allusion, he discusses the unearthly one-hundred-and-fifty-degree range of temperatures recorded in an Ungavan year, and lists the dates when the thermometer varied almost one hundred fahrenheit degrees in twenty-four hours (II, 248, 250). Worse perhaps than Cartier's conjecture that Labrador was the "land God gave to Cain,"<sup>20</sup> McLean's description, together with his

quotation, vividly attest to the existence on earth of a sublime landscape that Milton had envisaged only at the back of Hell.

Such a sublime extreme of nature provides a suitable end point for this brief survey of the range of written responses to the geography of the Northwest and Arctic. Enduring life in the wilderness was certainly assisted by the challenge of writing that life down, and in the imaginative appropriation of the landscapes in which they resided or through which they sojourned, these traders, like a host of their peers, demonstrated a notable aptitude worthy of our consideration as an early stage in the rise of literature in Canada. If, with the notable exception of David Thompson's work, the rendering of landscape in terms of European understandings of nature appears overt in this body of literature, we are reminded that studies of the fur trade in any discipline must not lose sight of the European perceptions of the world that gave the trade life and that sustained it for so long.

I fear not the Dart, from Fingal's bloody arm,  
Which often was atain'd in fair virgin's blood warm!"  
'Oh! say not so - Graina!- The most noble of man  
Is Fin'Mor Mac Donel - great King of his Clan -

Protector of virgins, avenger of wrongs;  
From Clar-Sgethe<sup>+</sup> to Lvahlin - he governs the throng:  
The stay of the widow - succour to the daughter;  
His arms he uses, the monsters to slaughter!"

"I'll follow my Dearmed, o'er mountain and moor,  
The moment thou fallest, shall be my last hour;  
To leave thy forlorn in this first wood,  
Twere better my Grave were that deep torrent flood."

'Fair Graina my love, for thy Dearmed don't fear,  
Whilst he holds his broad shield, and handles this  
spear;  
He defies the Fingallians - let them come man by man,  
I brave the most valiant in all Fingal's clan!'

( Should Dearmed have hide him from this noble chace?  
( To the Lance of the swiftest, belongs the first place,  
( Sure Fingal would think, I I durst not shew my face;  
( Would thou then, thy Lover, be brought to disgrace?

'I will his to the chace, myself and my hounds;  
The Fingallian, may like, to look sullen and proud.  
Ill shew my Graina, the choice she has made,  
Was worthy her hand, whether living or dead.

To my lance is reserved this mighty Torc-Nen<sup>++</sup>  
No other before me dare make him his prey.

+ The Isle of Sky - & Sweden

++ Wild Boar

1. A beautiful walk of more than a mile could be formed along the face of this hill, until it should terminate in the vale of Nusqually, & with a slight aid from the axe, splendid prospects obtained. I have not explored the bank on the north side of the streamlet, but probably there, a road could be much further prolonged & when tired of the shady wood you could emerge into the boundless prairie, to which any nobleman's park in which I have been cannot once be compared either in size, beauty or magnificence.
2. . . . there is a good sized burn, . . . Followed its course for some distance upwards--its banks are level & all around there is an abundance of tall pines, no scarcity of picket wood. . . . On Monday morning Anderson & I landed with the men & commenced a war of extermination agt. the "leafy denizens of the Forest"--a barricade of fallen trees was formed, within which we all encamped in the evening--the men in huts formed of branches & we in tents. It was a lovely evening & I think a landscape painter would have found a good subject for his brush in our encampment "under the greenwood tree"--the ample bay with its woody islets & rocks & the surrounding peaked & snow dappled mountains--the felled trees--grass & herbs had then the freshness & verdure of life . . . .
3. In a fine evening from the top of the hill we have something here of a fine prospect ending in a vast & unbounded extent The flat woody borders of the valley penetrating the lake in alternate points contrasted with the opening Lake & the Eye divested of the Rugged black Rocks & the undetermined snowy shades & the somber shade of night casting its thin Mantle over light & shade & lastly the serene harmony of the whole may approach the beautiful & sublime, but raise the Eye to the bold features of the black Rugged Rocky cliffs & crags rising over this terrific end of the Lake resembling huge masses of majestic shade contrasted with the Gloomy Hollow & deep blue expanse of the Lake & we have a true resemblance of the Grand & Terrific.
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5. The opening view of this valley at the other end is very fine & picturesque, the smooth & sloping varigated mountains spreading out on both sides & the end of the valley crossed by a Barrier of high Rocks rising in fanciful forms, we are now camped near, but the valley and sides of the mountain as usual is soaked in snow water & from the number of knotty tufts of matted Grass & Moss Roots, the Canadians call Tetes de fammes is fatiguing to walk in & mars the pleasures we would otherwise enjoy in the sequestered beauties occassionally presenting themselves in these horrid desolations of Gods creation.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>See The book of Canadian prose: volume I, the colonial century; English-Canadian writing before Confederation, ed. and introd. by A.J.M. Smith (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1965), rpt. (1973), p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup>See Percy G. Adams, Travel literature and the evolution of the novel (Lexington: The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1983).

<sup>3</sup>Alexander Mackenzie, The journals and letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, ed. by W. Kaye Lamb (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, for the Hakluyt Society, 1970), p. 128.

<sup>4</sup>See W.O. Kupsch, "A valley view in verdant prose: the Clearwater valley from Portage La Loche," Musk-Ox, 20 (1977), p. 33; and MacLaren, "Alexander Mackenzie and the landscapes of commerce," SCL, 7 (1982), 141-50.

<sup>5</sup>Sir George Simpson, Narrative of a journey round the world during the years 1841 and 1842, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1847), I, 45. Subsequent references will depend on this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur S. Morton, Sir George Simpson, overseas governor of the Hudson's Bay Company: a pen picture of a man of action (Toronto and Vancouver: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1944), pp. 230, 233-34.



<sup>7</sup>See Charles L. Batten Jr., Pleasurable instruction: form and convention in eighteenth-century travel literature (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press, 1978).

<sup>8</sup>Alexander Henry the Elder, Travels and adventures in Canada and the Indian territories between the years 1760 and 1776 (New York: I. Riley, 1809); rpt., introd. by J. Bain (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.; Toronto: G.N. Morang and Co., 1901); facs. rpt. of 1901 ed., introd. by Lewis G. Thomas (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1969), pp. 240-41.

<sup>9</sup>Sir George Simpson, Narrative, I, 45.

<sup>10</sup>The journals of William Fraser Tolmie, physician and fur trader (Vancouver: Mitchell, 1963), p. 167. Subsequent references will depend on this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>11</sup>Tolmie was reading the play at Fort McLaughlin on 17 May, two months before (p. 278).

<sup>12</sup>Samuel Black, A journal of a voyage from Rocky Mountain Portage in Peace River to the sources of Finlays branch and north west ward in summer 1824, ed. by E.E. Rich and A.M. Johnson, introd. by R.M. Patterson, The Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. XVIII (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1955), p. xx. Subsequent references will depend on this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Simpson, Narrative of the discoveries on the north coast of America; effected by the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company during the years 1836-39, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1843); facs. rpt. (Toronto: Canadian House, 1970), I, 66. Subsequent references will depend upon the facs. rpt. edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>14</sup>This drawing, entitled "Victoria Headland, Mouth of the Thlew-ee-cho-dezeth," had appeared in George Back, Narrative of the arctic land expedition to the mouth of the Great Fish River, and along the shores of the Arctic Ocean in the years 1833, 1834, and 1835 (London: John Murray, 1836); facs. rpt., introd. by William C. Wonders (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1970), facing p. 390.

<sup>15</sup>Franklin's scene appears in his Narrative of a second expedition to the shores of the polar sea in the years 1825, 1826, and 1827 . . . (London: John Murray, 1828); facs. rpt., introd. by Leslie H. Neatby (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1971), pp. 35-6.

<sup>16</sup>John McLean, John McLean's notes of a twenty-five year's service in the Hudson's Bay territory, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1849); facs. rpt., ed. by W.S. Wallace, 2 vols. in one, Publications of the Champlain Society, vol. XIX (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1932), I, 145-46. Subsequent references will depend on the 1932 edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>17</sup>Capt. Henry Lefroy was surprised by the high level of intelligence and education among fur trade factors, and especially by McLean's, which he noted when the two were stationed at Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River in 1844. See Capt. Henry Lefroy,

In search of the magnetic north: a soldier-surveyor's letters from the North-West 1843-1844, ed. by George F.G. Stanley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 119, 111.

<sup>18</sup>John Milton, Paradise Lost (London: 1667, 1674); rpt. in John Milton: complete poems and major prose, ed. by Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis: Odyssey/Boobs-Merrill, 1957), Bk. II, 587-91, 594-605.

<sup>19</sup>See MacLaren, "Arctic exploration and Milton's 'frozen Continent'," Notes and Queries, new ser., 31 (1984), 325-26.

<sup>20</sup>The voyages of Jacques Cartier, ed. by H.P. Biggar (Ottawa: Publications of the Public Archives of Canada, 1924), no. 11, p. 22.

He said, and stood up, loke a lusty tall Oak,  
 A Hero con ed - on pillars of Rock:  
 Two noble white Hounds, proudly follow'd the Chief,  
 THE Deer of their mountain, oft redden'd their teeth.

The Boar was the largest, e'er seen o'er Mor-Vin:  
 When he heard the Fingallians, he made for Ben -Guil-  
 bin<sup>+</sup>

The dogs are unleach'd - deep moith'd each, at his  
 heels;  
 The boldest, most forward, his enormous Tusks feels.<sup>+</sup>

Clad in moveable Quills, a poison'd cuirass,  
 Which he shook from his sides, on those in his pass,  
 Would resist the best steel, from more feeble hands;  
 But what could resist the Fingallian band?

Each tusk in his head, was a yard in full length,  
 The flame of a furnace, scorch'd less than his breath;  
 He vomited fire, both from moith and his eyes;  
 The smoke from his nostrils, had darken'd the skies.

He stood on his feet, full eighteen foot high,  
 No wonder Fingallian alone, could come nigh;  
 No Lion of Lybia - no Hydra of Lernaean,  
 Could equal this monster, of North Caledon:

The chace sweep'd along, over moor and o'er moss,  
 He stoop'd not to parley - Leim-chailleach to cross<sup>++</sup>  
 Being foil'd in his purpose - the Duth-Cheilli<sup>+++</sup>gain  
 He turn'd on his track to his old haunts again

+ A mountain of that name

++ A gap between 2 mountains where old women - i.e.  
 witches are wont to practice the art of jumping

+++ A forest in the vicinity

Threetimes he makes head, and threatens his foe;  
 As often He's baffl'd, and feels a fresh sore,  
 The sound of the Bow-String, is heard from a far,  
 Of which he makes light as if arrows were atraws"

Not so the sharp lance - so enormous in length,  
 And sent without erring, by Herculean strength;  
 Tho' hundreds were broken, that day in the strife  
 A few lasted large, of the vitals of life."

'Twas clear that the monster was failing in power,  
 He slackens his pace, but more dreadful he lowers;  
 The flower of their dogs, had now lag'd behind,  
 By his tusks they were scotch'd, by his quills were  
 blind.

And many bold Gail, by the same was affected;  
 But Fingal more prudent their ardour he checked,  
 Commanded to march, in two columns, class rank,  
 In order to strike, both his right and left flank.

At lenght in despair, and deep desperation,  
 He faced in fury, the Fingallian nation,  
 That phalanx of heroes, with lance in their hand;  
 Scarcely were able, his first-onset withstand.

But fending a welcome, he little expected, the  
 The loss of his blood, his fury had checked  
 He thought most prudent, to trust to his heels,  
 And gain, if he could, to the top of the hills."

Bold Dearmed impatient of prudent delay  
 And wishing the honor the monster to slay,  
 Sprung out of the rank - in an instant his dart,  
 In the side of the monster is sunk thro' the heart.

He's brought to the earth the tremendous Boar:  
 And yields up his blood in torrent of gore;  
 The Fingallians send up a deafening Hurra:  
 Which echos return from each cavern and carn."

Yet struggles with death, tho' his body was pierc'd,  
 And seem'd, as if nail'd, by Lances to the earth,  
 Still he rolls for life, on the saturate Sword;  
 'Till his neck was disjointed, by Dearmed's broad swo  
 rd.

He's down - 'Tis done! The Fingallions then shout,  
 By the hand of Mac Jurl! "To whom else would he stoop!  
 Bold Dearmed, thou proved thyself as of yere,  
 Hide not thy Bal-shuc, from our Fair any more."

But Fingal was wroth, sullen silent he stood;  
 His friends were alarm'd, lest an evil he broods,  
 And not without cause: by Dearmed's fresh glory,  
 His own seem'd lessen'd - a stain on his prowess.

His Rival that morning had shewn much contempt,  
 By appearing before him so early and prompt  
 Broke thro' his strict orders, which these in command  
 Can never forgive - what a king can't withstand.

Awaken'd at length from his dark mediation,  
 Said "Dearmed thous art, the man of thy nation: )  
 To the beldest in war, belongs the first station; )  
 All else are abortions - the drop of creation. )

Now up, and mete out the Boar that we may see  
 From snout to heel, how may feet the monster be."  
 Barefoot he did, and strange, he met'd thirty-two;  
 Fresh praise was lavish'd - but which was Dearmed's  
 due.

Fingal said "Mete once more, from tip of tail to  
 snout  
 I'd have him measur'd fair, to end our inward doubt;  
 I gift thee with the sharp'st Lance 'mong my thousand  
 spears,  
 None is worthy of such Lance, who dreads - death or  
 fear."

Then Dearmed arose with his heart void of guile  
 The brave often fall, by the crafty in wile  
 As he met'd the Bear 'gainst the poisonous quills  
 The most ven'ous of all sinks deep in his heel.

Alas! but too late, fell the venomous dart:  
 But begg'd of Fingal, to cure his death's smart  
 But Fingal looks proudly, and was the more cool  
 And said he would die "the death of a Fool".

Then sounded a march, quite calm as unfeeling,  
 Which seems a just part, that becomes a great king;  
 The Fingallians follow'd, none dare rest behind  
 Yet to brave the bold hero, was less to their mind.

That brave, but an hour, was the pride of his clan,  
 None left on the moor, without friend, or a man!  
 Save his two noble dogs, who howl, on his shield,  
 By th'side of their master, they'll die on the field.

This was more cruel, than the poison to bear,  
 And he look'd for his arms, his Bowels to tear;  
 But his friends had taken his sword and his Lance,  
 In case on his life, he'd attempt, by mischance.

No bulls could bellow, enrag'd at each other,  
 And echos resounded, from each mountain together,  
 E'en pitying Nature put on a dark cloud,  
 To mourn a bold son - to own might be proud.

He tears his own hair, he tears up the Hether,  
 Large fragments of rock - he counts, light as Feather:  
 Down the mountain he hurls, to a watery bed,  
 By so potent a hand, dash'd in thousand small shreds.

His ponderous strength, was now much exhausted,  
 The noblest parts by the poison affected,  
 Inflamed his blood - fermented the marrow:  
 He calls upon death - to end pain and sorrow.

Being none more calm, of fair Grainia he thinks,  
 To bring him some liquor - some water to drink;  
 She heard his first call, was at a short distance,  
 But alas! - ere she reach'd - he is past all assistance!!!

"And art thou thus fallen, mighty Dearthed Mac Jurl!  
 By wily old Fingal, a tyrant most cruel;  
 Alas! thou modest light of my counsel this morn:  
 That dread for thy honor which now I must mourn!

But faithful to Dearthed, I'll lay on thy corse,  
 (Tho' false to old Fingal) I'll die for thy loss:  
 Thy two faithful dogs, and Grainia thy Bride,  
 Most happy to die by my Heroe's fair side!!"

The last verse of the Tradition - proves the  
 tale true - & goes thus -

viz "Crathrar Dh'fay sinn anse a'n Tulaich<sup>+</sup>  
 N athair na Muic a fhiadaich,  
 Ghraina ghral, n'igin Reigh Mhic Mhuirich,  
 'N dha Ghrala Chuilrin - agus Dearthed! "

+ A Mound - eminence - In scripture "Tuloich nuomh  
 a Dhe" is God's holy Mount.

McKENZIE, Charles

7

Post Script

Thus fell noble Dearmed, a Dog on each side,  
And Grainna Nic Vurich, his ( illl̄cit ) fair Bride;  
Their tomb is still seen - 'tis that Tulloch-dearmed;  
And were they not burri'd, by Slicc Mhurach Reabhich?

You'll find Tulloch-dearmed south-east Achnaclerach;  
Belonging of you to Chlann Murach Reablech,  
For Claith- mor, agus Biddag, so famous in story,  
And for keeping their word - not less to their glory.

But alas! - they are scatter'd - far wide and abroad!  
And I fear that the best are now under the sod!

But still were they gather'd - each sprig and each  
scion,  
They'd shine you some Gails! - would not bear contra-  
diction.

I'll name you a pat'arch - please God he's not gone!  
He can shew you such youths - the pride of Terre-bonne  
These are, in straight Line - from the Great Murach-  
Mor,  
So renown'd 'mong Chlan Choinnich\* in days of yore.,

If the cause was a good one, they'd lag not behind  
They would settle a Fracass, when not to their mind  
As their Ancestors did - with their drawn broad sword  
- the point of the Biddage - no - palavering words.

Fair Grainna's mourning counsel to Dearmed & his Ans-  
wer - or the beginning of the old song - the origin  
of the above story -

"A Dearmed este a dingh a 'n fhaidh,  
O'n cintench que phaidh bhreng i,  
Na ti'ir creidaidh do Mhac Donil,  
O'n she cumhadh bhiagh hure Chrila."

' Grainna, nach phan u sambrach,  
'Sna ti'ir taina da do chrila:  
Cha lèinn mo chuidh di'n ' tsheilly diom,  
Air sgath fheirgh a fhir na Thienne.'

Charles McKenzie

Arch. H.M.

Choinnich: Mac Kenzie = son of Coimneach ("The Scots Tradition in  
Canada", de P. 312)



Sac Paul 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1840

To The Honorable Rodrick M. Knizer Esquire

Dear and highly Respected Sir!

The Annual Period is arrived which awakens the natural worries of us from sons of the North - from a certain forgetfulness which Absence often begets - so that this Period has enough to do to rouse our wonted indolence into exertion - and remind us of our absent friends - It may not be altogether so - we often remember and think of our absent friends - even Commune with them - yet for my own part - I ever found this same Period a most pleasing and a most troublesome one - Pleasing, that I had an opportunity to address my friends - and troublesome - that my inactivity prevented me from doing what I most ardently wished to do - but one day after day, "I thinking about it, and about it" - without advancing one step -

But I ever found, and I trust I ever shall find, more pleasure in addressing you my very Dear Sir, than one would imagine, considering your high, and deservedly high, station in Society - and my own insignificance - but those who think that way, do injustice to both - forgetting that there must needs be, one poor and another Rich - they would have the Rich incapable to the poor - depriving the rich - of the greatest pleasure there is - to confer on them (at least those of them who are of that way of thinking) - to assist the poor rather by thousands or their Continuance -

But Sir, there is now 38 years since your great Condescension permitted my poor Acc't to you - the honor of that Privilege I claim now almost as a matter of right - and my not receiving half a line from you this last season was to me a sore disappointment - but any thing should <sup>have</sup> happened at Ferrisburgh which I would be sorry to learn - yet strange to say - man is ever anxious to hear even the very worst - while ignorance or occasion is a blessing -

But I am happy to think that nothing I would be sorry to have had taken place at Fimbois - as several of our old friends left Canada last Spring - from whom I had letters - and knowing your Particularity to me - I think they would mention it had any of my surmises been correct - I therefore attribute your illness to these unfortunate troubles in the Canadas - which indeed have unhinged many minds from every other less Concern - and particularly Quebec men - who must not only suspect their own rights - but the right of a whole Country - at the sacrifice of their own innumerable Comforts and that of their families -

I think there are many in Canada who have done this - and who will soon have the happiness to have their names down in the Page of History - as Patriots - or benefactors to their Country - yet there is every reason to expect and hope, that much Good will follow this partial Evil - but not in the manner these Patriots had in view at their Out-break - If ever a Party "Reckoned without their Host" - the "Fasperrow Party" did it - I am too insignificant to hazard an Opinion - but it seems clear that too much British Government exists throughout the British Colonies - which "Lord Durham's Report" - made evident to every Capacity but the French Canadians, by the rashness of a few visionaries have put themselves beyond Redemption - nor would they accept the greatest boon - in return <sup>for</sup> their wounded Pride - the natural consequence of <sup>their</sup> boasted vanity and ignorance -

Certainly Canada is not an enviable place to reside in at present - we complain in this Country of our monotonous way of Existence - which was never so much so as of late years - and tho' it agrees well with my years and Infirmary I do not find much Pleasure in it - There is one Curse attending this Place - that when one Parts - with a friend - a relation or a Child - there is every Probability, that the Parting was - Never to meet again in this world! - Not so in the more happy time of Lord Wellington - there were chances of happy meetings in the course of a few years of friends & relations -

I believe I informed you six. about this time last year that my son Hector - had the preceding winter with us here - and that he was about entering the Red River Seminary - unless he would be taken into the Company's Service as an Apprenticed Clerk -

No small interest was made in his behalf to enter the Service in that Capacity - by the very first man in this Country - some on my own Account but by far the greater number on the young man's own Account - but it seems that that could not be granted to any born in the Indian Country - let his Education and natural Capacity be what they will be ~~what they~~ - that honor of entering the Service as Clerks is the Privilege of European born alone -

'Tis not only in Colonial Governments that there are disqualifications - it must be also in the Government of Indian Traders - our blessing of a Monopoly -

The young man entered the Service - not indeed an Apprenticed Clerk - but a Post Master - a Grade of late invention - This is much against my will - not that I am fearful but that his own Capacity might rise him in a few years to a higher Grade - but unfortunately no ability or talent can wash out the stain of Birth - There are now from 60 to 70 Boys in the Red River Seminary - a dozen of whom are ready yearly to enter the Service in the same Capacity - if they can - better Educated than the Chief Factors - whether may not be altogether the case with Hector under his present Chief Factor but I do not see the use of so much Greek and Latin for these Post Masters since neither artificial or natural arguments are of any avail -

Hector was sent to McWenzers River under Mr Murdoch McPherson - a Gentleman from Inverloch - who entered the late N.W. Service in 1816 - now a Chief Trader - & I must say that I am so far pleased that Hector is under him - being a particular friend of my own - This I am certain that Hector's unassuming Modesty and amiable disposition will gain him friends where - soon he goes - Granting six - the very worst a young man could have in this Country - of which Hector is curst with more than an ordinary share -

My worthy friend and your rotation Rod<sup>d</sup> McKinnie Esq<sup>r</sup> was naturally in low spirits - when he wrote me last summer - on account of the Death of his beloved Son Benjamin who died the preceding Summer of a Consumption in the Sandwich Islands - where he had been sent for the Recovery of his health! -

A Clever Young Man of great Promise - nothing but his Death could be against him in this Service - and had Providence been pleased to ~~prolong~~ <sup>prolong</sup> his days - there was all appearance he would have overcome the Prejudice of his birth -

The "Captain" I am told is getting very old in his looks - but his of a happy Highland Constitution and keeps his health well - Another of his Sons entered the Service this last Summer on the same terms as my Boy did - but allowed by every body - and more so than by his father, to be far inferior to Hector in Point of Capacity - but my unfortunate Boy - allowed himself to be overcome by the Kindness heaped on him by the Gentlemen at Norway House - I wish he had no disposition d'etre Chartrant - or he would be some years longer in School to the Satisfaction of his amiable and Accomplished Preceptor who treated Hector more a Companion than a School Boy, his two last years

I have had a long letter at length - from "Square McKinnie", my Cousin Ordronant of Wellamston - but now a "Citizen of the world" - without a home, sans bin me Terre - Poor man! nothing short of ruin would stop him - I feel for him greatly - and I am sorry am not in a Circumstance to assist him in his distress - I am myself without a house or home - and my health not very robust - I have a family depending on that health and my exertions - I cannot at my time of life think of depriving them of any part of that little Savings - a rigid Economy enabled me to lay by from a scanty Salary - my family has the first Claim, as the first right - I thought I had saved my Cousin from a Gaol once before - I was mistaken - he was in every way of manner far better situated than I was myself - and not in danger of a Gaol -

As I cannot apise time out of his diffentness - I have not right to blame him - yet I cannot help thinking - that he desired too much attendance on the Great, to the neglect of his own busimp - To my certain Knowledge he was in the habit of Borrowing Money - when ever he had the least hope of succeeding - even some years before my Trip to Down Canada - Alexander advised me - as a Cousin - take my Money out of the hands of the N.W. Co's Agents - & put it into his own hands for better security and to greater advantage to myself - 'Tis very true Sir - that I was to lose my hard Earnings with in way - but I must have been a Mad-man at the time - had I considered his security better than the N.W. Co's - He did what he could to borrow Money from me - prized the security of Land - rather than Money - Persuaded me to purchase Lands - by all means - but his own lands at Williamsstown were the very best in Upper or Lower Canada - had I been otherwise inclined to purchase his Superior Property were too high, and beyond my means - I thought the best way to get quite of him was to make him a present of £50 - but what was that to a man who could spend thousands - His Property & house went off "for a mere song" he tells me - I have no doubt of it - I cannot see, what had he to do with so much Borrowing - knowing as he must - that there must be a day for Payment -

He advises me strongly to go down and live in Canada - "Time for you to leave that miserable Country - no doubt yourself & Mrs. Wilkerson would live more happily in Canada" - That is your opinion my dear Cousin - but I am of a far different one - and we shall not make the trial until you convince me - out of an erroneous opinion - This Country is miserable in many respects - but we are accustomed to this things, and I do not regret us - I wish you every manner of happiness in Canada - which I could not enjoy - even if I had the means I am too much of an Indian - or rather tasted too much of Indian life - It does not require much to reconcile a Civilized being to the Indian life - but a mighty task to Reconcile an Indian to a Civilized life and thinking there is nothing for me I am for <sup>with</sup> than to remain where I am - as long as Providence will

Permit me to discharge my duty to the Company, without the fear of Bailiffs, duns, nor  
demands -

Something of a mighty Change has taken place in the Indian Country  
Spiritous Liquor has been Abolished at length - Some had their doubts of the  
Effect this would have on the Trade - nor do I believe that the Company abolished  
it willingly - for fear of Offending the Trade - I had but one Opinion all along - but  
which was not asked - and that was - and is - that the Abolition of Liquor is the  
most happy Event that ever took place since the first "Pale-face" entered the  
Country - for every individual Concerned - Every other Changes and Contracts, were  
for the benefit of the Chosen few - at the sacrifice of the Interest of the neglected many  
but the Abolition of Liquor - every one will feel its benefit - Whence did all our  
troubles in this Country spring - was it not from Liquor -? The Nations' ties here  
would rather the abolition had not taken place - but the Indians are a Primitive  
People - they are neither etched by success nor dejected by disappointments - and as  
to prevent them from hunting - their own necessities is spur enough - I have enjoyed  
more quiet throughout this winter than ever I know any one season before  
an Indian is the mildest of all human beings to deal with - when his Passions  
are not under the influence of Spiritous Liquor -

With every sincere wish for the health & prosperity of yourself  
and every branch of your numerous and lovely family - not forgetting my  
humble but sincere respects to the Amiable Mrs. McKinnis

I have the Honor to be

My Dear & Venerable Sir

With esteem and much respect

Your Obedient Humble Servant

Charles McKinnis

Charles M. McK

Disqualification of  
Native born for higher  
employ in H.S. by  
abolition of liquor sales

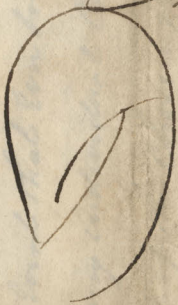
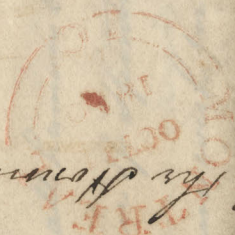
W. L. W. Young  
New York 22. May 40



James Cannon

Fort Sumner

To the Honorable Secy. War



Rec'd on 14th Oct 40

*[Faint, illegible handwriting on the reverse side of the envelope]*

McKENZIE, Charles

1840 22 mai Lac, Seul, à Hon. Roderick McKenzie, TB

Dear and highly revered Sir!

The annual period is arrived which awakens the natural reveries of us from sons of the North - from a certain forgetfulness which absence often begets - so that this period has enough to do to rouse overwrought indolence into exertion - and remind us of our absent friends. It may not be altogether so - we often remember and think of our absent friends - even commune with them. Yet for my own part, I ever found this same period a most pleasing one and a most troublesome one pleasing, that I had an opportunity to address my friends - and troublesome - that my inactivity prevented me from doing what I most ardently wished to do. But no, day after day, "Thinking about it, and about it", without advancing one step.

But I ever found, and I trust I ever shall find, more pleasure in addressing you my dear Sir, than one would imagine, considering your high station in society - and my own insignificance - but those who think that way do injustice to both, forgetting that there must needs be one poor and another rich, they would have the rich inaccessible to the poor, depriving the rich of the greatest pleasure their riches confers on them ( at least those of them who are of that way of thinking ) to assist the poor either by their means or their countenance.

But Sir, there is now 38 years since your great condescension permitted my free access to you - the honor of that privilege I claim now - almost as a matter of right - and my not receiving half a line from you this last season was to me a sore disappointment - lest any thing should have happened at Terrebonne which I would be sorry to learn - yet stranger to say - man is ever anxious to hear even the very worst - while ignorance on occasions is a blessing.

But I am happy to think that nothing I would be sorry to hear had taken place at Terrebonne - as several of our old friends left Canada last Spring - from whom I had letters - and knowing your partiality to me. I think they would mention it had any of my surmises been correct. I therefore attribute your silence to these unfortunate troubles in the Canadas - which indeed have unhinged men's minds from every other less concern - and particularly public men who must not only support their own rights



but the right of a whole Country, at the sacrifice of their own immediate comforts and that of their families.

I think there are many in Canada who have done this and who will now have the happiness to have their names down in the page of History - as patriots - or benefactors to their Country. Yet there is no every reason to expect and hope that much good will follow this partial evil, but not in the manner these patriots had in view at their out-break. If ever a party "Reckoned without their Host", the Papineau party did it. I am too insignificant to hazard an opinion, but it seems clear that too much misgovernment exists throughout the British Colonies - which "Lord Dalhousie's Report" - made evident to every capacity but the French Canadians, by the rashness of a few visionaries have put themselves beyond redress - nor would they accept the greatest boon - in return for their wounded pride - the natural consequence of their boasted vanity and ignorance.

Certainly Canada is not an enviable place to reside at present. We complain in this Country of our monotonous way of existence - which was never so much as of late years - and 'tho it agrees well with my years and capacity I do not find much pleasure in it. There is one curse attending this place - that when one parts with a friend, a relation or a child, there is every probability that the parting was never to meet again in this world! Not so in the more happy time of Fort William - there were chances of happy meetings in the course of a few years of friends & relations.

I believe I informed you sir - about this time last year that my son Hector past the preceeding winter with us here, and that he was about entering the Red River seminary - unless he would be taken into the Company's service as an apprentice Clerk.

No small interest was made in his behalf to enter the service in that capacity - by the very first men in this Country - some on my own account but by far the greater number on the young man's own account. But it seems that that could not be granted to any born in the Indian Country - let his education and natural capacity be what they will. That honor of entering the service as Clerks is the privilege of European born alone. 'Tis not only in colonial

McKenzie, Charles

3

1840 22 mai (SUITE)

Governments that there are disqualifications, it must be also in the Government of Indian Traders - our blessing of a Monopoly.

The young man entered the service - not indeed an apprenticed Clerk - but a Post Master - a grade of late invention - this much against my will - not that I am fearful but that his own capacity might rise him in a few years to a higher grade - but unfortunately no ability or talent can wash out the stain of birth. There are now from 60 to 70 Boys in the Red River Seminary - a dozen of whom are ready yearly to enter the service in the same capacity - if they can  $\frac{1}{2}$ -better educated than the Chief Factors - which may not be altogether the case with Hector under his present Chief Factor but I do not see the use of so much Greek and Latin for these Post Masters since neither artificial or natural agreements are of any avail.

Hector was sent to McKenzie's River under Mr Murdoch McPherson - a Gentleman from Gairloch - who entered the late N.W. service in 1816 - now a Chief Trader - & I must say that I am so far pleased that Hector is under him - being a particular friend of my own - tho' I am certain that Hector's unassuming modesty and amiable disposition will gain him friends wherever he goes - qualities sit - the very worst a young man could have in this Country - of which Hector is curst with more than an ordinary share.

My worthy friend and your relation Rod<sup>k</sup> McKenzie Esq<sup>r</sup> was naturally in low spirits - when he wrote me last summer on account of the death of his beloved son Benjamin who died the preceeding summer of a consumption in the Sandwich Islands - where he had been sent for the recovery of his health!

A clever young man of great promise - nothing but his birth could be against him in this service - and had Providence been pleased to lengthen his days - there was all appearance he would have overcome the prejudice of his birth -

The "Captain" I am told is getting very old in his looks - but he's of a happy Highland Constitution and keeps his health well. Another of his sons entered the service this last summer on the same terms as my Boy did - but allowed by every body - and by none more than by his father, to be far inferior to Hector

in point of capacity - but my unfortunate Boy - allowed himself to be overcome by the kindness heaped on him by the Gentlemen of Norway House. In short he had no disposition d'être Chartreux - or he would be some years longer in school to the satisfaction of his amiable and accomplished preceptor who treated Hector more a companion than a school Boy, his two last years.

I have had a long letter at length from "Squaw McKenzie", my cousin cidevant of Williamstown - but now a "Citizen of the World", without a home, sans bien ni terre. Poor man! Nothing short of ruin would stop him - I feel for him greatly - and I am sorry am not in a circumstance to assist him in his distress, I am myself without a house or home - and my health not very robust. I have a family depending on that health and my exertions. I cannot at my time of life think of depriving them of any part of that little savings - a rigged economy enabled me to lay by from a scanty salary - my family has the first claim, as the first right. I thought I had saved my cousin from a gail once before. I was mistaken - he was in every way of manner far better situated than I was myself - and not in danger of a gail.

As I cannot assist him out of his difficulties, I have not right to blame him - yet I cannot help thinking that he danced too much attendance on the Great, to the neglect of his own business. To my certain knowledge he was in the habit of Borrowing money - whenever he had the least hope of succeeding. Even some years before my trip to Lower Canada - Alexander advised me, as a Cousin, take my money out of the hands of the N.W. Co's Agents - put it into his own hands for better security and to greater advantage to myself. 'Tis very true sir that I was to lose my hard earnings either way - but I must have been a mad man at the time - had I considered his security better than the N.W. Co's. He did what he could to borrow money from me - praised the security of Land - rather than money - persuaded me to purchase lands - by all means - but his own lands at Williamstown were the very best in Upper or Lower Canada had I been otherwise inclined to purchase his superior property were too high, and beyond my means. I thought the best way to get quits of h' was to make him a present of £50 - but what was th to a man who could spend thousands? His property & house went off "for a mere song" he tells me. I have no doubt of it. I cannot sir, what had he to do with so much Borrowing knowing as he must that there must be a day for payment.

McKENZIE, Charles

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1840 22 mai ( Suite )

He advises me strongly to go down and live in Canada.

"Time for you to brave that miserable country. No doubt yourself & Mrs McKenzie would live more happy in Canada". That is your opinion my dear cousin, but I am of a far different one - and we shall not make the trial until you convince me out of an erroneous opinion. This country is miserable in many respects - but we are accustomed to this things, and the do not frighten us. I wish you every manner of happiness in Canada - which I could not enjoy - even if I had the means. I am too much of an Indian - or rather tasted too much of Indian Life. It does not require much to reconcile a human being to the Indian Life - but a mighty task to reconcile an Indian to a civilized life and thinking.

There is nothing for me therefore better than to remain where I am - as long as Providence will permit my to discharge my duty to the Company without the fear of Bailiffs, duns or dungeons.

Something of a mighty change has taken place in the Indian Country. Spiritous Liquor has been Abolished at length. Some had their doubts of the effect this would have on the Trade. Nor do I believe that the Company abolished it willingly - for fear of affecting the Trade. I had but one opinion all along - but which was not asked and that was - and is - that the Abolition of Liquor is the most happy event that ever took place since the first "Pale-face" entered the country - for every individual concerned. Every other changes and compacts were for the benefit of the chosen few - at the sacrifice of the interest of the neglected many but the Abolition of Liquor - every one well feel its benefit. Whence did all our troubles in this country sprang - was it not from Liquor? The natives 'tis true would rather the abolition had not taken place - but the Indians are a primitive people - they are neither elated by sump nor dejected by disappointment - and as to prevent them from hunting - their own necessities is spare enough. I have enjoyed more quiet throughout this winter than ever I knew any one season before an Indian is the mildest of all human beings to deal with - when his passions are not under the influence of Spirituous Liquor.

With every sincere wish for the health & prosperity of yourself and every branch of your numerous and

lovely family - not forgetting my humble but sincere respects to the Amiable Mrs McKenzie.

I have the honor to be  
 My déar & Venerable Sir  
 With esteem and much respect  
 Your Obedient Humble Servant  
 Charles McKenzie

Arch HM

Reçue à Montréal le 14 octobre 1840, du Nipigon

voir "Many tender ties", de S. Van Kirk, pp. 148, 211, 246

Sac Seul 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1839 -

Honorable Rodrick MacKenzie Ferrisbonne

Honorable and Respected Sir:-

You can scarcely

imagine how much pleasure I feel at this moment in sitting down to acknowledge the honor & receipt of your inestimable favor of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April 1838 - which I received in due course of the once a year Post - If I was happy at the sight of this often repeated mark of your kindness - I was thrice happy at its contents - I truly enjoyed a double portion of the family circle congregated then at Ferrisbonne - That you, my dear Sir brook off from such a circle of happy friends, not only to cast a thought - but to write a most friendly and excellent letter to so humble a being as I am, ought to make the favor more valuable in every way to me - but I trust I do not undervalue your consideration -

May the enjoyments which then enjoyed at Ferrisbonne continue long, very long to be its lot, without a break or a cloud to darken the fun of so beautiful a family future - Ah - my dear Sir! - God forbid that I should be a propagator of evil or rather the ill, and the uncertainty of all human enjoyments, but I fear the future your dear draw of the names & circle of those you retired from to write to me - was too perfect to be of long duration - I trust in the goodness of a kind Providence - which I know will direct every thing as it seems good in His sight without regard to persons - and can turn my musings into the greatest joy and perfect happiness -

Mines -

Mrs Rachel & Anne — "Fretty Girls - well Accomplish'd" —  
God bless you! — "ye bonie blossoms a' —  
"Strawen meek ye quid as well as brae —

"An gie ye lads a-plenty" — The Ladies will excuse  
these homely lines — for Robert Burns made us of them in addressing  
the very just Girls in the Empire — He had the merit of Composing  
them — in his Dream — but I repeat them broad awake — & their  
full sense comes from my very Soul —

I am well aware My dear Sir, that the more a man has  
the more is expected from him — one must not live for himself  
alone — he must share his largess to others — who perhaps will  
not enquire what trouble he had in acquiring this largess —

But notwithstanding the trouble one has in spending these  
superfluities of his youthful Savings 'Tis not a bad thing in  
one's advanced Age to have £900. <sup>per</sup> Annum to share among ones  
friends — and where that sum is to be expended in Hospitality — no  
wonder that there is a Gathering — and had I been asked at what  
rate you lived at Firsbonne — I certainly would double the  
sum you mentioned — and if your expenditure is within that  
sum — it must be owing to the good management of Mrs M<sup>c</sup>  
Kewter, no less than your own — Here in this Country we are  
strangers to those Call on higher life — but one thing I know, is,  
that my year's Salary requires more management to live with  
in it of late than it did in by gone years — and that I am not  
much Richer than I was the day I had the honor & pleasure of  
waiting on you at Firsbonne — The S<sup>t</sup>. B. Servants is not the  
Servants to lay up — Eager Commiserated Gentlemen — "the only  
Gentlemen" in this Country — Care is taken that none else has

a Claim to that distinction - but we have many Grads - from Prime  
nobly and downwards - Names newly introduced in<sup>to</sup> the Indian Country

You are right my dear Sir, in <sup>the</sup> supposition that, we do  
not think or speak of those Great Characters who have been the  
Pioneers of this Country - Perhaps the one third of the present  
Commissioned Gentlemen - never heard their name mentioned  
we speak of nothing now but the Honorable Hudsons Bay - (or  
Languesant) N.B. Company - its Great Actions, Power and might  
we emblazon forth at no rate - and that the last junction and present  
State of the Country are entirely owing its Superior wisdom &  
the Superior Enterprise - of its old and faithful Servants - This  
is the Language of our old "Key-blues" in this Bay - what they  
say in the North - I know not - If the old negroes - gained by  
the Change, in their Furs, they lost in their Pride and Independence  
for they are nothing now - but a kind of supp Servants - to learn  
them to be humble - All power is taken out of their hands - Except  
one - which man is subject to by nature - I mean the Power of doing  
evil - which I fear is left entire - 'Tis certain the more a man is  
humble before his Superiors, the more he is a tyrant to his Inferiors,  
I believe few in the Country have experienced the truth of this  
more than I have done of late Years -

Your other supposition is the real one - Mr John Stewart  
of Athabaska went home & staid 3 years ago - a friend of mine  
who was <sup>here</sup> in England, thus wrote me last Autumn from Moose  
Factory "Your old acquaintance Mr John Stewart, I saw  
" often in London - he had his Wife, Mary Taylor, sent out  
" here last Fall - but the old Man - would not marry her



was he promised, and the poor Girl determined on leaving him,  
she was to have come out to her native Country again - but her  
Brother in England detained her with himself - where I make  
no doubt she shall get married - as the old Gentleman settled  
about £400 upon her - he has not settled any upon us yet

Perhaps you have heard from himself ere - thus, but not the  
Story - which requires no Comment of mine - but Entre nous - I  
do not believe that M<sup>r</sup> Steward - wished for her or had interest  
enough to get her sent to him - she was sent - being a (Cidwant)  
sister in Law to - Perhaps M<sup>r</sup> Steward was tired  
of that great Commission - That he is not settled in any place  
is a bad sign - but true to R. W. Plans -

I am sorry my very dear Sir - that your Indian History  
is so dilatory - or rather that it seems to be put off - for the  
rest of your own life time, and that of all those who are  
any way interested in its success & the Character of its Honorable  
author - You know very well, that I am very little acquainted  
with these things - yet not entirely ignorant of that Rage which  
exists in the Civilized world - after Histories & Travels in  
foreign Countries - I do not know any thing that would take  
so well at this moment as a Good History of the Indian Country  
of which - as far as my knowledge goes, none was ever printed  
Hundreds of Scraps - both by Americans & Britons - the two kinds  
fiction - & the rest called - "3 Years residence in North America"  
without even describing the true History of one single Tribe  
of the North American Indians - Assume that all the Phy-  
lantropeists of England - and England it self have turned  
their face towards Africa - and lost sight entirely of  
the

the "poor North American Indians. They lavish Forty Millions  
sterling on the west India Affairs. While they abandon the  
Indians to their fate—who are more worthy of their Sympathy  
than Africans. They think by being as they say "under the  
"Protection of the British Government," is enough. What, in  
the name of Goodness, is that Protection the British Government  
ever afforded the natives of this Country? has not the B. Government  
sold <sup>them</sup> as a Monopoly. They certainly know nothing of any other  
Government than that of the ——— and something of Indian Traders,

There is a Race abroad for bringing Barbarous Nations under the  
yoke of the Gospel and in no Country more than in Great Britain  
I doubt not but the two thirds of these are sincere while most  
certain the one third are interested from thirst of selfish gain.

The natives of Africa & Asia—may well suppose, that there  
is not a single Heathen <sup>under</sup> either Great Britain or America. Seeing  
so many Missions—and the zeal of these Countries. It would  
surprise them to be told that there is a Country under the British  
Government for upwards of 200 Years—and a People with whom  
they carry on Commerce—and susceptible of every improvement—and  
yet no attempt was ever made to preach the Gospel among them.  
Nay. they are more degraded and debased than when the  
first European set his foot on American Soil—the Epoch of the setting  
Sun of its native inhabitants. There is every appearance of the quick  
extinction of the North American Indians—but our distant hope of  
improving their minds.

I must own my dear Sir, that this degeneration is not in the  
Language of the Interest Indian Trader—to whom the Indians and  
this Country seem to <sup>have</sup> been abandoned. I had no small hopes

that when your Indian History would come out, that it would draw  
a portion of the Attention of the British "Public" and foreigners  
to the State of the Indians. I am almost Certain that a Standard  
work on such a subject would have a great Run in England. They  
may well be tired of their "Peter Simple - Jacob Careful" and a  
thousands such long Yarns - or has Sir John Ross' Log - & his Stowards  
Edition of the same Log - ~~given~~ <sup>for the Book</sup> them a distaste of Esquimaux and  
Sleds - &c - no matter, he fookits his three Genes - for been frozen  
up for two winters unavoy whate I Drums & Artee Foxes - making a  
Book to the no small disappointment of his subscribers - no matter  
also - Capt. - Sir J. Ross - saved the Provisions of the wreck of the Fury  
which otherwise would be lost to England - the only good he did for  
old England - that I know - for which he was handsomely Rewarded  
by a Knighthood, besides un petit os à ronger from John Bull -  
And the N. W. Passage, is in as much doubt as it was 20 years ago - after  
all these Knighed Captains - could do - All these boasted discoveries  
are of no manner of use to any in the world - if of any, it must be to the  
N. B. Company alone -

I have here the Literary Gazette of 1835/6 - I can form  
some Idea how your Indian History would take at this time, by  
the Thrust there is for every thing out of the ordinary track of things,  
Particularly when the Authors are known to be men of talents &  
Characters - and not those who go about - to make up a Big  
Book - and what is most surprising that even these, can sell  
their big Books - But yours I am certain will bestow a benefit on  
the British Empire - and honor on its Author - and let me tell  
you my dear Sir - that you are not justified by withholding  
it so long - "That money is scarce" - was there ever such a lame excuse  
from a great man - 'tis only to be a little more indebted -

My worthy friend Mr. John Swright - took care to furnish me with the "Public Papers" - both in French & English during the Canada Rebellion up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Aug. last - well, I believe the Canadians - burnt their fingers, they had before but go odd Grievances on their List - I think now they could make out one hundred - They have indeed brought it upon themselves and gave an opportunity to the British Government to feel the Canadas on a better footing than ever it was - without calling forth any spirit of revenge and altho' necessary for many years past - the Government seemed averse to any harsh measures - Always yielding - Surprising such a shrewd man as Mr. Gaspereau would be taken in the snare - "the Canadian O'Connell" - yes - the Irish O'Connell will not be taken in his own snare -

I see you are transporting your State Prisoners - some to Bermuda & some to Botany Bay - You should rather send them to St. Bay if you wished to furnish them truly - Those to Bermuda are during the Durrs Pleasure - but plan - They wish to try what stuff our Young Durra is made of - if she was Old Durra Bep I would pity them -

One would suppose that you knew, that these Patriots are not fond of Crowned Heads - and that they will scarcely accept their lives from a "Fitticoot" - I see Mr. Bonchette - with whom I got acquainted first at Ferrisbonne - among these - I am sorry - but not surprised to see him in so good a Company - I believe he married a Daughter of Mr. Simon Fraser - (Le Cheval Blanc - Comme on dit dans le Nord) - If so they were well matched for geldings -

In respect Canada they were not so very humane to their Prisoners they were giving a "Hoist" to some - & I am afraid that your next Neighbour Jonathan - will Plot out à tes ri'n - "sympathizing" with the Canada Patriots - and certainly if they did not succeed 'tis no fault of Jonathan's - he gave them all the help he could -

Jonathan finds the present a favorable opportunity of fixing the  
"North Eastern boundary Line" - and is determined not to miss it - Great Britain  
and Mexico must own they have an Amiable Neighbour -

I have no news of any kind to communicate - only that we are  
all well in health at this time - My only son just the winter  
with us here - He is to return to Red River in a few days - to continue  
his Education - unless indeed - the Governor will take him into  
the service - Several Gentlemen made interest in his behalf with-  
out any solicitation on my part - he being a very promising youth  
I have no great wish that he should enter the service - I cannot  
expect to last long - I should not wish him therefore to be far removed  
from his Mother & only Sister - all my savings cannot aspire higher  
than a Patch of land in Red River Settlement - should I escape  
of feet at Lac Seul - Our mutual worthy friend "the Captain"  
has a large family - has 3 Sons in the service - & 2 daughters married,  
no less than 5 at school in Red River - how many he has with him-  
self I know not - but there are some still on their Mother's breast - This  
is something indeed - but he is a Chief Factor - and Cheffain of the  
McKenzie's in the North - I call him "Cabin head" -

I hope my dear Sir, you will have the Goodness to excuse the  
liberty I have taken - in this shamefully long letter - you see Sir  
how greatly I rely on your wonted Condescension -

My very best Respects & wishes to Mrs. McKenzie and her amiable  
family - tho' good wishes carry little - they are truly sincere from  
Honored Sir

Your ever obliged

and Humble Servant

Charles McKenzie

The Honorable

Roderick Mackenzie

Terre Bonne

Lower Canada



Mr R Mackenzie

Encluse (inter)



Mr R Mackenzie  
Natum 1839

Examenary of the  
S. M. Mackenzie  
Rue de la Reine  
Montreal  
(inter)

*[Faint, mostly illegible handwriting on the left side of the envelope, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]*

*[Faint, mostly illegible handwriting on the right side of the envelope, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]*

P.S. I have here rare things - "Gaelic Poetry" - in Manuscript - I have built alone  
preclude sending them for your Criticism - I have not so bad an opinion of the  
poets as to fear the Critics - They are indeed Baybells - & Local - of no value where  
none understands them - They would rise the laugh in our Country - & I laughed  
myself as some happy Concerts in them - one thing good - they wiled several  
heavy hours and drop off of my shoulders -

One thing more of which I'm not so very confident - I was taking down  
Notes a few of our Highland Songs - for the Douglas Lasses of Fernburn  
but my heart misgave me, for fear I should do injustice to the Music of  
my native Hills - & that they would not be understood in Canada - for having  
asked once the daughter of Highland Parents - to play a Highland Tune - her  
sentimental Mother - said "Oh - Miss Mary only plays nothing but Italian &  
German Music" ! - I have a better opinion of the Douglas Lasses of S. B.  
& these are at their service should they call for them - C. W. K.

McKENZIE, Charles

1839 23 avr Lac Seul, à Honorable Roderick McKenzie  
Terre-Bonne

Honorable & revered Sir!

You can scarcely imagine how much pleasure I feel at this moment in sitting down to acknowledge the honor & receipt of your inestimable favor of the 15th and 16th April 1838 - which I received in due course of the once a year Post. If I was happy at the sight of this often repeated mark of your kindness, I was thrice happy at its contents. I truly enjoyed a double portion of the family circle congregated then at Terrebonne. That you, my dear Sir, break off from such a circle of happy friends, not only to cast a thought - but to write a most friendly and excellent letter to so humble a being as I am, ought to make the favor more valuable in every way to me - but I trust I do not undervalue your condescension.

May the enjoyments which then reigned at Terrebonne continue long, very long to be its lot, without a break or a cloud to darken the face of so beautiful a family picture - Ah - my dear Sir! - God forbid that I should be a prognosticator of evil or rather the ill and the uncertainty of all human enjoyments, but I fear the picture your pen drew of the names & circle of those you retired from to write to me - was too perfect to be of long duration. I trust in the Goodness of a kind Providence - which I know will direct every thing as it seems good in His sight without regard to persons - and can turn my misgivings into the greatest joy and perfect happiness.

Misses Rachel & Anne - "pretty girls - well accomplished" - God bless you! - "Ye bonie blossoms a' - Heaven mak ye quid as weel as braw - An gie ye lads a-plenty" - The ~~lads~~ <sup>lads</sup> will excuse these homily lines - for Robert Burns made us of them in addressing the very first girls in the Empire. He had the merit of composing them - in his dream - but I repeat them broad awake & their full sense comes from my very soul.

I am well aware my dear Sir, that the more a man has the more is expected from him - one must not live for himself alone - he must share his largess to others - who perhaps will not enquire what trouble he had in acquiring this largess.

\* influence de Burns sur les Canadiens. Voir "The Scottish tradition in Canada"  
de P. 208



But notwithstanding the trouble one has in spending these superfluities of his youthful savings 'tis not a bad thing in one's advanced age to have £900 pr annum to share among one's friends - and where the sum is to be expended in Hospitality - no wonder that there is a Gathering - and had I been asked at what rate you lived at Terrebonne - I certainly would double the sum you mentioned - and if your expenditure is within that sum - it must be owing to the good management of Mrs McKenzies, no less than your own. Here in this country we are strangers to these call on higher life - but one thing I know is that my year's salary requires more management to live within it of late than it did in by gone years - and that I am not Richer than I was the day I had the honor & pleasure of waiting on you at Terrebonne. The H.B. service is not the service to lay up. Except Commissioned Gentlemen - "the only Gentlemen" in this Country. Care is taken that none else has a claim to that distinction - but we have many grads - from prime nobles and downwards - names newly introduced in the Indian Country.

You are right my dear Sir in the supposition that we do not think or speak of those great characters who have been the pioneers of this Country. Perhaps the one third of the present commissioned Gentlemen never heard their name mentioned - we speak of nothing now but the Honorable Hudson Bay - (Le languisant) H.B. Company - its great actions, power and might we emblason forth at no rate - and that the last function and present state of the Country are entirely owing its superior wisdom & the superior enterprise of its old and faithful servants. This is the language of our old "Sky-blues" in this Bay. What they say in the North I know not. If the old N. Westers gained by the change in their purses, they lost in their pride and independance for they are nothing now but a kind of upper servants to learn them to humble. All power is taken out of their hands, except one - which man is subject to by nature. I mean the power of doing evil which I fear is left intire. 'Tis certain the more man is humble before his superiors, the more he is a tyrant to his inferiors. I believe few in the Country have experienced the truth of this more than I have done of late years.

Your other supposition is the main one. Mr John Stewart of Athabaska went home & retired 3 years ago. A friend of mine who was in England, thus wrote me

McKENZIE, Charles

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1839 23 avr ( Suite )

last Autumn from Moose Factory "Your old acquaintance Mr John Stewart, I saw often in London. He had his wife, Mary Taylor, sent out him last Fall - but the old Ram would not marry her as he promised, and the poor girl determined on leaving him. She was to have come out to his native Country again, but her Brother in England detained her with himself where I make no doubt she shall get married, as the old gentleman settled about £400 upon her - he has not settled any when as yet."

Perhaps you have heard from himself ere this, but not his story - which requires no comment of mine - but entre nous - I do not believe that Mr Stewart wished for her or had interest enough to get her sent to him. She was sent - being a ( cidevant ) sister in law to ----- Perhaps Mr Stewart was tired of that great connexion. That he is not settled in any place is a bad sign - but true to N.W. plans.

I am sorry my very dear Sir that your Indian History is so dilatory - or rather that it seems to be put off for the rest of your own life time, and that of all those who are any ways interested in its success & the character of its Honorable author. You know very well that I am very little acquainted with these things, yet not entirely ignorant of that Rage which exists in the civilized world, after Histories & Travels in & of foreign Countries. I do not know any thing that would take so well at this moment as a good History of the Indian Country of which as far as my knowledge goes, none was ever printed - Hundreds Scraps - both by Americans & Britons - the two-thirds fiction - & the rest called "3 years' residence in North America" without even describing the true History of one single tribe of the North American Indians. It seems that all the Philanthropist of England - and England itself - have turned their face towards Affrica - and lost sight entirely of the poor North American Indians. They lavish Twenty Millions Sterling on the West India Affricans while they abandon the Indians to their fate - who are more worthy of their sympathy than Affricans. They think by being as they say "under the protection of the British Government" is enough. What in the name of Goodness, is that protection the British Government ever afforded the natives of this Country? Has not the B. Government sold them as a monopoly. They cer-

tainly know nothing of any other Government than that of the ----- and something of Indian Traders.

There is a rage abroad for bringing Barbarous nations under the pale of the Gospel and in no country more than in Great Britain I doubt not but the two thirds of these sinners (?) - while most certain the one third are interested from thirst of selfish gain.

The natives of Affrica & Asia - may well suppose, that there is not a single Heathen under either Great Britain or America - seeing so many Missionaries - and the zeal of these Countries. It would surprise them to be told that there is a Country under the British Government - for upwards of 200 years - and a people with whom they carry on commerce - and susceptible of every improvement - and yet no attempt was ever <sup>made</sup> to preach the Gospel among them. Nay - they are more degraded and degenerated than when the first European set his foot on American soil - the epoch of the setting sun of its native inhabitants. There is every appearance of the quick extinction of the North American Indians - but no distant hope of improving their minds.

I must own my dear sir, that this digression is not in the language of the interest Indian Tarder to whom the Indians and this Country seem to have been abandoned. I had no small hopes that when your Indian History would come out, that it would draw a portion of the attention of the British public - and foreigners to the state of the Indians. I am almost certain that a standard work on such a subject would have a great run in England. They may well be tired of their "Peter Simple - Jacob Carefuls" and a thousand such long yarns - or has Sir John Ross' Log - & his Stewards Edition of the same Log - given him a distaste - of Esquimaux and seals &c - no matter he pockets his three Gineas for the Book - for been frozen up for two winters among white Bears & Artic Foxes - making a Book to the no small disappointment of his subscribers. No matter also - Capté - Sir J.\* Ross - save the provisions of the wreck of the Fury which otherwise would be lost to England - the only good he did for Old England - that I know - for which he was handsomely rewarded by a Knight hood, besides, un petit os à ronger from John Bull. And the N. West passage is, in as much doubt as it was 20 years ago - after all these knighted Captains - could do. All these boasted discoverers are of no manner of use to any in the world - if

McKENZIE, Charles

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1839 23 avr ( Suite )

of any, it must be to the H.B. Company alone.

I have here the Literary Gazette of 1835/6. I can form some idea how your Indian History would take at this time, by the thirst there is for every thing out of the ordinary track of things particularly when the authors are known to be men of talents & characters - and not those who go about - to make up a big book - and what is most surprising that even these, can sell them by the books. But yours I am certain will bestow a benefit on the British Empire - and honor on its author - and let me tell you my dear sir - that you are not justified by withholding it so long. "That money is scarce"! Was there ever such a lame excuse from a great man. 'Tis only to be a little more in debt.

P.S. I have rare things - "Gaelic Poetry" - in manuscript - their bulk alone preclude sending them for your criticism. I have not so bad an opinion of the poet as to fear the critics. They are indeed Bagatells - & Local - of no value where none understands them - they would rise the laugh in our Country & I laughed myself as some happy conceits in them - one thing good - they wiled several heavy hours and days off my shoulders.

One thing more of which I'm not so very confident. I was taking down in Notts a fine of our Highland Lugnags - for the Bonny Lasses of Terrebonne but my heart misgave me, for fear I should do injustice to the music of my native Hills - & that they would not be understood in Canada - for having asked one ( of ) the daughters of Highland parents - to play a Highland Tune - her sentimental mother - said "Oh - Miss Marjory plays nothing but Italian & German Music"! - I have a better opinion of the "Bonie Blossoms" of T.B. & these are at their service should they call for them.

C. MCK

Arch. H M

Lettre reçue à Montréal le 18 septembre 1839. Note de Roderick McKenzie à l'endos: Mr C. McKenzie Nipigon 1839 )

Bonny Point Sea Seal 14<sup>th</sup> May 1843

Honorable Rodrick McKenzie

Reverend and Dear Sir:

Your favor of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1842

honored me in due time, which added much to my enjoyment, to see that you still possessed your wonted good health - a blessing not always the Companion of man of fewer number of years - The threat of "Your going over writing" casts a dark shade upon it - I sincerely hope, my dear Sir for better things - and that you will not deprive your numerous friends of that pleasure for many, many years to come - If the Good wishes of the poor, have any Claims on the Great, I certainly have the strongest Claims to be reckoned among your very best well wishers - and every branch of your family - and your continued remembrance, and kindly Correspondence have often cheered me in these solitary wilds, and kept me in better humour with myself and the adversity of fortune - and your kind admonitions were of no small assistance to me in bearing the pangs of <sup>my</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>own</sup> hold fortune by the trading Strops - and distribute her at their will - or the will of their (not their real friends) but the will of those who have the art of getting round them - either for their personal advancement <sup>or their</sup> ~~of their~~ friends - Thank God! I learned to value these things less than I once did - I see few of of these - who are seemingly more fortunate than myself enjoying a greater share of happiness than I do - They may hoard or expend more than I care - I see little pleasure in either Case - Small was her the share of money earned in this Country expended to good purpose - As for the rest, my more fortunate contemporaries are liable to every adversity of Accidents & natural Causes that I am here to - True, they may have the Consolation on a death Bed, to know that they leave their family in more easy circumstances - should their minds be of that way of thinking -

Your friends indeed my dear Sir - Cannot expect that you write with the same steady hand in your venerable old age as in by gone days - or that you can enter so largely into papering words - but to think to be deprived forever of hearing from you, is to me a most mournful idea - the very thought is more bitter than I can express! - Still I cherish the hope to hear of your enjoying life and happiness to an advanced old age - should I myself survive the period - the words *Tuore bonna* - will call forth my bitter feelings! -

As to the Tale of Dermid I was well aware that it had nothing of a Romance about it except the names of the Hero himself and Singal - and if I troubled you with such nonsense it was from the idea that you might have heard the Tradition in your Boyish days - as the scene is laid not far from Ach. on Loch - The Tale in its original is not in a high strain of Poetry - and I am sure I did not

improve much on the Original - Still I believe I did it no injustice - bad or poor as it may be from me - a literary Translation would be worse - To myself it was so far of use to me as to lighten so much of spare time - which weighs heavy on our heads in this Country - and man being a busy Animal - he must either be doing good or evil - more prone to the latter than the former - he should therefore Choose - and adopt the less dangerous alternative -

I do not intend as to intrude it on a Gentleman - whose Good opinion I valued - but who could not expect any thing better from me - I am not the man Sir to write such Stories - which require the highest Polish - of the highest Genius and Education of the present day - but I could give a Coup de Main - to any man of that Class for the "grand work" of not a few good Stories - full of Ocean Storms, and other happy Fancies of our Highland Mountains and the belief of <sup>the</sup> Simple Swains among whom I had my birth -

That these are fictitious - and imaginary - but not the less attractive on that Account - particularly to men of imaginative <sup>or</sup> Superior Powers -

If Dornel is an Irish Story the Bear could hardly be too Big in size - human if any thing was to be gained by it - the Bear could be cut down to a moderate size or rather - modest size - But Meise in Gaelic means not altogether the idea attached to 'Bear' in English - It means any monstrous animal - to which they have no specific name - i.e. Meise - Mhara - is a Whale - and these Polar Bears found in many parts of Europe (and in Scotland I believe) might once be beloned to animals of as mighty a size - as I made my Bear - and Sir - I could not sink the Singularity in Chase of a Low Land Mole - That would bring my ideas of these Heroes down to the level of Ordinary men - Contrary to what I was taught in youth -

That I heard in my youth parts - of what was called - "Uir - Sgril" or a "Sinnidh" is certain - but I never could find these names in M'Pherson's Opinion - but certainly his is more conformable to reason - It must have been the Irish version I had heard -

I am happy that you received the Journals from the States - I hope that my share of them remain there - I did send down a Bill of £100. last Summer to Mr James Smith - more in accordance to your wishes than my own - and I believe I did not a more foolish thing in my life - Heaven knows I'll can spare one hundred pounds - to Publishers - who fatten while Authors starve - I believe that none of the Authors of this several Journals now dream of publishing them on their own account, or even expected any pecuniary benefit from them - but merely to comply with your request - at least I did not - and I believe also, that the Authors of the most of these Journals, are numbed with the dead - I know very little indeed nothing at all about publishing - The more safe I am told - is by subscription - I wrote at the moment you had not given yourself any trouble about my poor share of these things - I had trouble must have been great - before any thing from me could be offered to the Press -

But my dear Sir - if it is gone to the Press, let it go to the Press - I owe you more than a hundred pounds - But I hope it will be an Appendix or Supplement to your own greater work - in that case I have not the least objection - and if unworthy of a place there I would better not to publish at all - but of this you are the better judge - my part of it would not form a volume of any great work - which I think yours will be, should

It soon see the light - No doubt some hundred Copies of any work of yours would get a market in this Country - unless the Carrage would be against it -

I am sorry to inform you that my son Hector was foolish enough to Resign his Situation in the Hon. Companys Service - last Spring - he was engaged for 3 years an Apprentice (Post Master) at £20 per Annum - the only Station the Natives of the Country are allowed in the present Concern - They may raise in time to higher Stations - 'tis said tho' none or few have as yet - He was in Charge of Fort Good Hope - then down on McKinnons River - But he got that Situation by the Falsity of M<sup>r</sup>. M. Johnson & tho' the Young man gave every Satisfaction - the Governor removed him to make place for Chief Trader Alex<sup>r</sup>. Fisher - & instead of 2 Mountains - Hector was sent to a new Post on Peels River - under a Chief Trader - I am truly sorry for this foolish Step of the Young man - Being allowed by good Judges of Proficiency in mens Capacity - and Steadiness - The Governor & Committee at home appointed him a Post Master at Fort Cheswyanan in Attabasca - but he was there in Charge of Fort Good Hope - & the Young Gentleman who came from Montreal Resigned his Appointment before he got inland - Hector was therefore obliged to remain in M<sup>r</sup>.s River district - He never was fond of the Fur Trade or the Country - these well Educated Natives do not relish to be considered inferior to Europeans born of less Capacities for this Country (at least) than themselves -

The Young man was always wishing to go down to Canada - and there without funds or means (and what is still worse) want of Experience of Civilized life - except what he learned from Books - I fear he would be lost, ere he could get a decent Situation - I do not know where he is at present - if he came out from the North he must have gone to Red River - I am truly at a loss what to do with him - As he leaves the Service of his own Accord, there is no more <sup>inter</sup> service for him - A Primitiv will not be taken back - a man can sin <sup>as</sup> but once - but I am not sure, that Hector is a Primitiv - I rather think <sup>has</sup> the Contrary - If he has Capacities, he seems to be Conscious of them & improves <sup>as</sup> he improves more than his father ever did - whether he succeeds better is my problem - <sup>cal</sup> - I wish he may not succeed worse -

My Daughter - a woman grown - is still at Red River Academy - where she is well spoken of by her 'Government' & M<sup>r</sup>. MacCallum - I myself am pleased with her Improvements - tho' she Costs me £35. per Annum - yet I mean to leave her there some time - not knowing what to do with her among Indians - I suppose Red River will be my own last Resort - when the Company send me of no more - Should I live to be useless - I am now full 40 years in their Service - and tho' I not hoarded well my yearly Salary - I hope the Company will not let <sup>me</sup> any of more, than oldest Servant starve in his old age - This you see my dear Sir is making out the best of a bad bargain -

I have the Honor to be  
much Obedient Ser

Your ever Obedient Humble Servant

Charles McKinnon

And my humble Respects to M<sup>r</sup>.s McKinnon & the happy  
innates Lombard Chateau -

TERREBONNE

Charles Henry

1/1/2

To the

Honorable Rodrie MacKinnon

LA CHINE  
3rd  
Sept  
1843  
L.C.

Terrebonne

Lower Canada

Speaks of the toll of Service  
by himself.





McKENZIE, Charles

1843 14 mai Bonny Point, Lac Seul, à Hon. Roderick  
McKenzie, Terrebonne

Reverend and Dear Sir!

Your favor of 10th April 1842 honored me in due time, which added much to my enjoyment, to see that you still possessed your wonted good health - a blessing not always the compassion of men of fewer number of years. The threat of "your giving over writing" casts a dark shade before it. I sincerely hope, my dear sir for better things, and that you will not deprive your numerous friends of that pleasure for many, many years to come. If the good wishes of the poor, have any claims on the Great, I certainly have the strongest claims to be reckoned among your very best well wishers - and to every branch of your family, and your continued remembrance, and yearly correspondence have often cheered me in these solitary wilds, and kept me in better humour with myself and the adversity of fortune, and your kind admonitions were of no small assistance to me in braving the frowns of men who hold fortune by the leading strings and distribute her at their will - or the will of their ( not their real friends ) but the will of those <sup>who</sup> have the art of getting round them either for their personal advancement or that of their friends. Thank God! I learned to value these things less than I once did. I see few of these - who are seemingly more fortunate than myself enjoying a greater share of happiness than I do. They may hoard or expend more than I can. I see little pleasure in either case. Small was ever the share of money earned in this country expended to good purpose, be for the rest, my most fortunate contemporaries are liable to every adversity of c & natural causes that I am here to - True they may have the consolation on a death bed to know that they leave their family in more easy circumstances - should their minds be of that way of thinking.

Your friends indeed my dear sir - cannot expect that you write with the same steady hand in your venerable old age as in by gone days - or that you can enter so largely into passing events - but to think to be deprived for ever of hearing from you, is to me a most mournful idea - the very thought is more bitter than I can express! Still I cherish the hope to hear of your enjoying life and happiness to an advanced old age - should I myself survive the period - the words Terre bonne will call forth my better feelings!

As to the Tale of Dirmud I was well aware that it had nothing Op<sup>er</sup>atic about it except the names of the Hero himself and Fingal - and if I troubled you with such nonsense it was from the idea that you might have heard the Tradition in your Boyish days - as the scene is laid not far from Achnacle-rach. The tale in its original is not in a high strain of poetry, and I must own I did not improve much on the original. Still I believe I did it no injustice - bad or poor as it may be from me - a library translation would be worse - to myself it was so far of use to me as to lighten so much of spare time which weighs heavy on our hands in this Country - and man being a busy animal - he must either be doing good or evil - more from the latter than the former - he should therefore choose - and adopt the less dangerous alternative.

I so far sinned as to intrude it on a gentleman - whose good opinion I valued - but who could not expect any thing better from me. I am not the man Sir to write such stories - which require the highest polish - of the highest genius and education of the present day - but I could give a coup de main to any man of that class for the "grand work" of not a few good stories - full of BeansShees and other happy Faims of our Highland Mountains and the belief of the Temple Swans among whom I had my birth.

That these are fictitious and imaginary but not the less attractive on that account particularly to men of imagination or superior powers.

If Dirmud is an Irish Story the Boar could hardly be too big in size - however if anything was to be gained by it - the Boar could be cut down to a moderate size or rather - modern size. But Muic in Gaelic means not altogether the idea attached to "Boar" in English. It means any monstrous animal, to which they have no specific name - i.e. - Muic - Mhara - is a whale - and these Fossil Bones found in many parts of Europe ( and in Scotland I believe ) might once be belonged to animals of as mighty a size - as I made my Boar - and Sir - I could not send the Fingalians in chase of a Low Land Mole - that would bring my ideas of these heroes down to the level of Ordinary men - contrary to what I was thought in youth.

That I heard in my youth parts of what was called "Uir Sgril'n Frinidh" is certain - but I never could find these puns in McPherson's Osean - but certainly

1843 14 mai ( SUITE )

his is more conformable to reason. It must have been the Irish version I had heard.

I am happy that you received the Journals from the States. I hope that my share of them remain there. I did send down a Bill of £100 last summer to Mr. James Keith - more in accordance to your wishes than my own - and I believe I did not a more foolish thing in my life. Heaven knows I ill can spare one hundred pounds to publishers who fatten while Authors starve. I believe that none of the Authors of this several Journals never dreamt of publishing them on their own account, or even expected any pecuniary benefit from them - but merely to comply with your request - At least I did not - and I believe also, that the Authors of the most of these journals are numbered with the dead. I know very little, indeed nothing at all about publishing. The more safe I am told - is by subscription. I wish at the moment you had not given yourself any trouble about my poor share of these things - that trouble must have been great - before anything from me could be offered to the press.

But my dear sir - if it is gone to the press, let it go to the press. I owe you more than a hundred pounds. But I hope it will be an Appendix or Supplement to your own greater work - in that case I have not the least objection - and if unworthy of a place there then better not to publish at all. But of this you are the better judge. My part of it would not form a volume of any great work - which I think yours will be, should it ever see the light. No doubt some hundred copies of any work of yours would get a market in this country - unless the Carrage (&) would be against it.

I am sorry to inform you that my son Hector was foolish enough to resign his situation in the Hon. Company's service - last spring - he was engaged for three years an Apprentice ( Post Master ) at £20 per annum. The only station the natives of the country are allowed in the present concern. They may raise in time to higher stations. 'Tis said tho' none or few have as yet. He was in charge of Fort Good Hope - the lower down on McKenzie's River. But he got that situation by the partiality of Mr. M. McPherson & tho' the young man gave every satisfaction the Governor removed him to make place for Chief Trader Alex<sup>r</sup> Fisher - ci devant of 2 Mountains & Hector

was sent to a new Post on Peel's River - under a Chief Trader. I am truly sorry for this foolish step of the young man. Being allowed by good judges of possessing no mean capacity and steadiness. The Governor & Committee at home appointed him a Book Keeper at Fort Chipwyan in Athabaska - but he was there in charge of Fort Good Hope - & the young gentleman who came from Montreal resigned his appointment before he go inland. Hector was therefore obliged to remain in McKS River district. He never was fond of the Fur Trade or the country. These well educated natives do not relish to be considered Inferior to Europeans born of less capacities for this country ( at least ) than themselves.

The young man was always wishing to go down to Canada - and there without friends or means ( and what is still worse ) want of experience of civilized life - except what he learned from books. I fear he would be lost, ere he could get a decent situation. I do not know here he is at present - if he came out from the North he must have gone to Red River. I am truly at a loss what to do with him. As he leaves the service of his own accord, there is no more H B service for him. A penitent will not be taken back. A man can sin but once. But I am not sure that Hector is a penitent. I rather think to the contrary. If he has capacities, he seems to be conscious of their possession. He possesses more than his father ever did. Whether he succeeds better is very problematical. I wish he may not succeed worse.

My daughter - a woman grown - is still at Red River Academy - where she is well spoken of by her "Gouvernante" & Mr McCallum. I myself am pleased with her improvements - tho' she costs me £35 per annum. Yet I mean to leave her there some time - not knowing what to do with her among Indians. I suppose Red River will be my last Resort - when the Company find me of no more use. Should I live to be useless. I am now full 40 years in their service - and tho' I not hoarded well my yearly salary - I hope the Company will not let one, of no<sup>(3)</sup>, their oldest servant starve in his old age. This you see my dear sir is making out the best of a bad bargain.

I have the honor to be                    much venerated sir  
 Your ever obliged Humble Servant  
 Charles McKenzie

McKENZIE, Charles

5

1843 14 mai ( SUITE )

P.S. My humble respects to Mrs McKenzie & the happy inmates Terrebonne Chateau

Arch HM

Lettre reçue à Lachine le 3 septembre 1843 et le 6 à Terrebonne

voir "The Scottish Tradition in Canada", de...  
St. John's College, Winnipeg, rattaché de Red River Academy, une école  
religieuse fondée en 1833. (P. 265) Fille et fils de Chs. McKenzie  
sont allés à Red River. Mention dans une autre de ses lettres, entre  
autres celles du 22.5.1840, 5.7.1837 - Voir notes ci-haut après  
lettre 22.5.40

Sacreal 4<sup>th</sup> May 1838 -

Honorable Rodrick Mackenzie Forsbourn

Dear and Revere Sir:

It is not without some misgivings that I embrace  
the annual opportunity we have in this Country of enquiring after  
the welfare of all those most dear to us. and not receiving a few  
lines from you last summer - a circumstance of rare Occurrence for  
these 35 years past. - even to so insignificant a fellow as myself - &  
showing your "Fidelity" to your N. West friends in general  
marks me dead the worst. - However My dear Sir, I had some  
consolation. a melancholy one indeed - but still a consolation this  
winter. having received some Montreal News Papers. viz. Le  
Populaire and la Chien d'Or, La Minerve. - to the 7<sup>th</sup> September  
last. - In number 64 of Le Populaire I saw the names of all the  
Hon. M<sup>rs</sup> du Conseil Legislatif who were present at Quebec at  
the then "Provoynard" - Judicial Session of ten days - together with  
the names of those absent. from "old age & indisposition" - Your  
honored name being among the absent -! On occasions of this  
nature we lay hold of slender Snyes. - I trust therefore. the absent  
that it was not from any immediate indisposition. - as that was  
not mentioned. - but I must grant that it was from Age. and that  
age is invariably accompanied with infirmities. - Yet relying on  
the Goodness of God: I sincerely hope that it will be graciously  
pleased to spare your valuable life in a Country that has much  
need of honest men. & particularly for the support & guidance  
of a large & lovely family - If this is not one of my sincerest wishes  
I know not what is sincerity. - & having <sup>my</sup> favour to ask. I cannot  
be accused of flattery.

Your being absent from the Legislature is no mark of  
your <sup>want of</sup> patriotism - I cannot see to what good would serve  
the

The presence of that whole Body, as long as Mr. Supernaw is pleased to be factious - strange to think that he has been allowed to go on from year to year without a Check - no other Government in the world would allow him the one half his frankness without bringing his head to the Block - nor even a Republican Government that ever I heard of - unless it be that most enviable Government of Texas - Supernaw will make Lower Canada a second Texas -

However it is hoped before this time that 'tis known whether you have a British Quixote or a Canadian Cromwell for your Sovereign - Supernaw has all the Cunning of Cromwell, without his Courage, or any Part of that unparalleled merit Cromwell possessed - They both work in the name of the People & Religion - of which they seem to be equally fond - Cromwell entered the House of Parliament threw down his watch on the floor trampled upon it - saying "I shall Crush you as I did to that watch" - if Supernaw has not entered your Legislative Chamber & Crushed his watch - should Supernaw do so threaten to Crush the Legislative Council? - That he may do as Cromwell did - Turn out the Executive with their Hats in their hands - & if he took the Hat from off Lord Gosford's head - few would regard the Personal insult - all this & more Supernaw would do if he had Cromwell's Courage -

But his La Fontaines & Morins, are not Cromwell fanatics - He is called the "O'Connell of Canada" by his own Clique - he has no claim to that title - tho' am no admirer of O'Connell, with his kind - every one is a "Patriot" - which I take to be, in most cases another word for "traitor" - Good heavens! what Rivers of Blood have been spilt these last 60 years under the name of Patriotism - !! -

In reading the accounts of these Canadian Heroes over their "Whisky" at their County Meeting - in that most foulsmelling Paper La Minerve - how often I thought myself at Fort Williams! - in its days of Glory - when each Canadian "Captain Bobadil" would come into the middle of the fort in his fern & cry out "I's suis homme! Baptême!! - until a stronger man come up - It was then - Fin! - Or voi cher fin? - But I have little to do with politics -

I was more than pleased to see the name of your Son Henry among these youths who were scholastical honors at the Examination of the Montreal College in Augt. last - Parents in general have much mind of these happy circumstances in the lives of their Children which call forth the best feeling - to reward them a little for the continued anxieties they suffer on their account - I have my only son at School in R. River where I believe, there is no prizes offered - but he certainly wins the praise of his Tutors - The Reverend Mr Jones could not bestow more praise on a youth than he does on my Hector - both as a Scholar & his natural disposition - In Mathematics he merits particular remark -

I do not know how these things are - They tell me that this R. River School is equal to a College Education - I doubt it much - but I grant that it answers all the purpose of a College Education in this Country - as if a Classical Education was absolutely necessary to become an Indian Trader - but they take the first care that we pay equal to Classical Education - The young man costs me £40. yearly - The worst is that after a liberal Education - I don't know what to do with him -

The Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company are unwilling to take Natives, even as Apprentices Clerks - & the favor that they do take - can never aspire to a higher station - by their Education & Capacity what they may - Is this not something of the "Curse of Cain?" - However I shall recall the young man this fall - as he wishes it - He may join the "Canadian Patriots" next Spring -

I am informed that Mr. Donald McKewen of Lake Erie - was wishing to dispose of his Property - & intended selling in either of the Canadas - What, has the brandy of Republicanism, of Liberty & Equality with a sprinkling of "Synch Law" now & then cost all their influence with Mr Donald? - He certainly was the greatest admirer of these Republic - can blessings ever known in this Country - but on a trial it seems they have their inconveniences - I would be less surprised to hear of his removing to Texas, than to hear of his going to Canada - he had no taste for a Monarchical Government - He had a good deal of influence with a Captain - in this Country for a time - could use it to advantage for Country man - Henry that Strangers were ready to second him - but no - he seems indifferent about men as he is of his Native Country - Yet I wish him well -



I too, Sir, feel the effects of disappointed hopes: - but now  
I feel the effects of old age so much, that it is useless to think of the  
Past - and I did these last two years enjoy more steady health  
than for some succeeding years. I am indeed a good deal a prey to  
Rheumatic Pains in my Arms & back - my Eye sight also feels the  
the effect of reading but <sup>think</sup> as a Gaps - time with worse light - I must now  
use the Burnings Glass of a Japanese Tobacco Box - for want of Spectacles -  
to read Common <sup>Print</sup> - Yet I must make the best of what is before  
me - as long as they I think me worth Keeping - nor can I say were my  
survival more ample that I am ready to leave the Indian Country -

It were known there is little satisfying temptation now left in  
this Country - particularly on this out of the way Part - Still, there is  
something bewitching - in this sort of life - that I do believe, that no  
one ever left it without regret - who Past 20 years of his life in it -

You yourself my dear Sir - might well be supposed to be an Exception  
now full of years & Happenings the highest honors - a liberal Government  
has to bestow - Nevertheless I am almost certain - the Charm is not entirely  
broken - & the Period you were in - or Connected with this Country  
you still recall with Pleasure - as the most happy period of your life -

Altho in reality, there is nothing in this Country to be compared  
to your present State - Patriarch of a large and amiable family  
with a large share of the bounty of Providence for their support -  
surrounded by friends & honored by all - Still tis not without its many  
anxieties - unknown in this Country - Every one & all, set out in the  
world in the sanguine hope to arrive at your present happy state  
but tis only One in Ten thousand that will win the Prize -

I took the liberty last summer to write very fully I believe -  
Let me here assure Mrs. McKinnon & her lovely family - that I shall  
ever feel a lively interest in their welfare - The offer of a Seneca bank  
is a Privilege the Poor Claim - the only thing they have to bestow -  
I also claim the honor to be

Honorable & Venerable Sir!

Your ever obliged & humble Servant

Charles McKinnon -

Chs McKays

Political

Papuan Com-  
pared to Cromwell

Natives excluded from  
employment in  
the H B Coy.

MCKENZIE, Charles

1838 4 may Lac Seul, à Honorable Roderick MacKenzie,  
Terrebonne

Dear and Revered Sir

It is not without some misgivings that I embrace the annual opportunity we have in this country of inquiring after the welfare of all those most dear to us - and not receiving a few lines from you last summer - a circumstance of rare occurrences for these 35 years past - even to so insignificant a fellow as myself & knowing your punctuality to your N. West friends in general makes me dread the worst. However my dear Sir, I had some consolation - a melancholy one indeed - but still a consolation - this winter - having received some Montreal News papers - viz Le Populaire and la chere dame La Minerve - to the 7th September last. In number 64 of Le Populaire I see the names of all the Hon. Messrs du Conseil Legislatif who were present at Quebec at the then prorogued-annual session of ten days - together with the names of those absent - from "old age & indisposition" - your honored name being among the absent -! On occasions of this nature we lay hold of slender twigs. I trust therefore - tho' absent that it was not from any immediate indisposition - as that was not mentioned - but I must grant that it was from age - and that age is invariably accompanied with infirmities. Yet relying on the Goodness of God! I sincerely hope that He will be Graciously pleased to spare your valuable life in a country that has much need of honest men - & particularly for the support & guidance of a large & lovely family. If this is not one of my sincerest wishes, I know not what is sincerity - & having no favor to ask, I cannot be accused of flattery.

Your being absent from the Legislature is no mark of your want of patriotism. I cannot see to what good would serve the presence of that whole Body, as long as Mr Papineau is pleased to be factious. Strange to think that he has been allowed to go on from year to year without a check. No other Government in the world would allow him the one half his pranks without bringing his head to the Block - nor even a Republican Government that ever I heard of - unless it be that most enviable Government of Texas. Papineau will make Lower Canada a second Texas.

x 18 au 26 aat 1837. Constitution suspendue le 27.3.38

2  
However, it is hoped before this time - that 'tis known whether you have a British Queen - or a Canadian Cromwell for your Sovereign. Papineau has all the cunning of Cromwell, without his courage or any part of that unparalleled merit Cromwell possessed. They both work in the name of the People & Religion, of which they seem to be equally fond. Cromwell entered the House of Parliament, threw down his watch on the floor, trampled upon it - saying - "I shall crush you as I did to that watch" - if Papineau has not entered your Legislative Chamber & crushed his watch - how often does he threaten to crush the Legislative Council? - that he may do as Cromwell did - turn out the Exect with their hats in their hand - & if he took the hat from off Lord Gosford's head - few would regard the personal insult - all this & more Papineau would do if he had Cromwell's courage.

But his Lafountains & Morins, are not Cromwell fanatics. He is called the "O'Connell of Canada", by his own clique - he has no claim to that title - Tho' am no admirer of O'Connell, with his Rent (?) every one is a "Patriot" - which I take to be, in most cases, another word for "Traitor". Good heavens! what Rivers of Blood have been spilt these last 60 years under the name of Patriotism -!! -!

In reading the accounts of these Canadian Heros over their "Wisky" at their County meeting - in that most frousome paper La Minerve - how often I thought myself at Fort Williams! - in its days of glory - when each Canadian "Captain Bobadil" would come in the middle of the Fort in his turn & cry out Je suis homme! - Bapteme!! until a stranger man came up. It was then Tien! Ce toi cher frere? - But I have little to do with politics.

I was more than pleased to see the name of your son Henry among these youths who won scholastical honors at the examination of the Montreal College in Augt. last. Parents in general have much need of these happy circumstances in the lives of their children which call forth the best feeling - to reward them a little for the continual anxieties they suffer on their account. I have my only son at school in R. River where I believe there is no prizes offered but he certainly wins the praise of his tutors. The Revrend Mr. Jones could not bestow more praise

1838 4 mai ( Suite )

on a youth, than he does on my Hector - both as a scholar & his natural disposition. In Mathematics, he meets particular remark.

I do not know how these things are. They tell me that this Red River school is equal to a college education. I doubt it much - but I grant it answers all the purpose of a college education in this country - as if a classical education was absolutely necessary to become an Indian Trader - but they take the first case that we pay equal to classical education. The young man costs me £40 yearly. The worst is that after a liberal education - that I know not what to do with him.

The Honble Company are unwilling to take natives, even as apprentices, Clerks - & the favored few they do take - can never aspire to a highest station, be their education & capacity what they may. Is this not something of the "Curse of Cain"? - However I shall recall the young man this fall - as he wishes it. He may join the "Canadian Patriots" next spring.

I am informed that Mr Donald McKenzie of Lake Erie was wishing to dispose of his property & intended settling in either of the Canadas. What, has the beauty of Republicanism, of liberty & equality with a springle of "Lynch Law" - now & then ) lost all their influence with Mr Donald? He certainly was the greatest admirer of these Republican blessings ever known in this country, but on a trial it seems, they have their inconvenience. I would be less surprised to hear of his removing to Texas, than to hear of his going to Canada. He had no taste for a Monarchical Government. He had a good deal of influence with a certain ----- in this country for a time. Could use it to advance a poor country man - seeing that strangers were ready to second him - but no - he seems indifferent about men as he is of his native country. Yet I wish him well.

I too, Sir, feel the effects of disappointed hopes! but now I feel the effects of old age so much that it is useless to think of the past - and I did these last two years enjoy more steady health than for some succeeding years. I am indeed a good deal a prey to Rhumatic pains in my arms & back. My eye sight also fails me - the effect of reading bad print as a pass-time with worse light. I must now use the Burning Glass of a J Tobacco Box for want of spectacles, to read common print. Yet I must make

the best of what is before me - as long as they think me worth keeping - nor can I say were my means more ample that I am ready to leave the Indian Country.

Heaven knows there is little satisfying temptati-  
on now left in this country - particularly in the  
out of the way part. Still there is something bewit-  
ching in this sort of life. That I do believe that  
no one ever left it without regret who past 20 years  
of his life in it.

You yourself my dear sir might well be supposed to  
be an exception now full of years & possessing the  
highest honors a liberal Government has to bestow.  
Nonetheless I am almost certain the charm is not  
entirely broken & the period you were in - or  
connected with this country you still recall with  
pleasure as the most happy period of your life.

Altho in reality there is nothing in this country  
to be compared to your present state, patriarch of  
a large and amiable family with a large share of  
the bounty of Providence for their support - sur-  
rounded by friends & honored by all - still 'tis  
not without its many anxieties - unknown in this  
country. Every one and all, sit out in the world  
in the sanguine hope to arrive at your present state  
but 'tis only one in ten thousand that will win the  
prize.

I took the liberty last summer to write very fully  
I believe. Let me here assure Mrs McKenzie & her lo-  
vely family that I shall ever feel a lively inte-  
rest in their welfare. The offer of a serene heart  
is a privilege the poor claim - the only thing they  
have to bestow.

I also claim the honor to be

Honorable & venerable Sir!

your ever obliged & humble Servant

Charles McKenzie

Arch H M

Montgomery 5<sup>th</sup> July 1837

To the Honorable Rodwell M. Kerwin

Dear and Reverend Sir!

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your most  
inestimable favor of 20<sup>th</sup> April 1836 - which honored me here on  
the 10<sup>th</sup> Augt. last - for which much of your continued kindness  
I can never pay - except to far as good wishes go - for your own well-  
fare and that of every individual of your throng - amiable and lovely  
family - of which you had the Condensation to mention to me by  
memory & etc - I thank you Sir - for the relation of your families  
from the inner recess of my heart I thank you, in which my soul has  
a share - May they long continue to comfort you declining years -  
and may the goodness of a merciful God! add to their Parents days  
to watch over their fiducial flock! -

I hope you have received my last letter - which is very proble-  
matical - for safe Passage of letters of late is very uncertain -

I was in March last I received two letters of "Capt." (Breadwinners  
of date 1834 & 1835 - and I could mention others that took  
as long a time, tho' written <sup>not</sup> half so far off as Isle a la Croix is -

Here I am my dear Sir - if not entirely out of the world - so  
far out of it, as to have seldom any communication with any of the  
civilized part of it - "forgetting and forgot" - Careless for the  
morose - Provided there be plenty fish in our Nets - Indifferent  
about Quilifs and Deers - executions and Sheriffs' Sales, & all  
that - which are no small terror to so many thousands in the  
civilized world - we do better without these things - which if once  
established here, we would be apt to be caught the very first  
for we are not without our faults - we are the deans of the Country -

There may not be many Charms in the life we live in this Country - but what will not Custom familiarize? - we all of us wish to be out of it - and no sooner we have that wish gratified than we would wish to return - 'Tis a failing in human nature not to be satisfied in any present state - when one object is gained another opens to the view, never before dreamt of - I hope there is a place where all these inordinate desires will be for ever at rest - & of a truth, that place must be beyond the Grave! -

We are under numerous privations, and some cases of real misery occur not known out of a Savage Country, we are debarred from every thing that makes life agreeable in a civilized state, the society of friends - the converse of wise men - "strong sights" and the improvements of arts, and man's ingenuity - and worst of all, we are deprived of hearing the Gospel preached - "And how can there be preachers, unless they are sent?" - In consequence, we are exempt from thousands of ills, diseases - and Crimes, inseparable from civilized society in a populous city - Accidents by water occur not unfrequently but seldom, or very rarely, by Fire - and in a case of fire, none but the Careless or Guilty can suffer - not so in populous Cities - tens of thousands of innocent and open bank people are brought to ruin in a few hours time by the negligence or Crime of one individual - Cr Brave who makes the High-way the field of <sup>his</sup> action would lose their time here - but there have been cases of House breaking accompanied with Murder -

I believe that the idea generally <sup>is</sup> abroad, that the Indians live almost entirely upon Carnage and blood - and that they <sup>is</sup> not a <sup>drop</sup> of the mild of humanity in their veins - that it is no Crime therefore to run them down - even by blood Hounds (as they have often been) or any other means for their entire extermination - This idea is founded



in error. No one ever <sup>any</sup> ~~spared~~ <sup>length</sup> of Home in their Country without ~~see~~  
saking of <sup>their</sup> ~~hospitality~~. I often did it. To the very last month. ~~ful~~ they  
had in the world. While their own offsprings were crying for ~~him~~  
- that Charity herself would forgive them were they to ~~keep~~ back  
the fortune they could not well spare. There is another idea  
abroad as false as the former. That every Indian woman or "Squaw"  
must be an abandoned, immodest being. Whereas the truth is, that  
they carry real and natural modesty - to a higher degree than any  
class of women that ever existed. Why - an Indian woman would  
suffer Fortune & death, before she would suffer a "Man-Maid-love"  
to examine her. And on my fair Country women you are of  
more value than Gold is to Brags. I <sup>would</sup> only wish to put you right  
on a delicate Subject, in a delicate Point. Think better, and extend your  
Charity towards these Children of Nature. Consider what you yourselves  
would be, were you born under the same ~~wool~~ and hard Circumstances.

'Tis very fashionable of late among benevolent Ladies, to extend their  
Charity to the furthestmost Corner of the world. for just object of benevolence  
while no one thinks of the Red man & his daughters. They are for  
many years under the British Government. of what that protection  
consists. - They are all of them now under the protection of the S. E. Co.

The more I see of the Indian Character, the more I admire it -  
their poverty - their necessities, their resignation, their patience under  
every hardship - their improvident way of living - their want of  
 foresight and Careless ness for the future. - Why Sir - every Indian  
from Ten Years old to his Grave is a Philosopher - That they are  
desertful and not to be treated on every occasion, cannot be denied  
but we cannot be surprised. Considering - that neither Gails nor the  
powerful arm of the Law can restrain the vicious Part of man -  
Kind in the Colored world -

I trust Sir that you will have the goodness to excuse this long  
description about the Indians & the Indian life - tho' full as you know, for  
you have often been pleased to mention a certain delight my letters  
afforded you - if so - En Verite Monsieur vous estes pas been  
difficile a vous Contenter - few besides yourself would dign to read  
my poor stuff - & I seldom write letters of late - I am an utter stranger  
to all our Chief men in this Country - there are not more than  
three or four of the Chief Factors whom I know personally -

I am not surpris'd that you found the Company of an old  
St. wister very agreeable in an evening after the duties of the day in  
a noisy House of Parliament when Politics run so high - as at  
Dunbar - besides Mr John Dugal Cameron is a most respectable  
& well informed Gentleman as you observe of him - few I fear from  
this Country that so much could be said - yet there are some - They  
have more leisure to study than in by gone days - I mean those  
who have good Books and are inclin'd to study them -

As you have seen my Cousin - Square (not Kewie) of Rivin out Paris -  
one you must have heard of my "Fair Connections of Dy Town" - for  
he always was a gossip - tho' he never enquired after that Connection  
when she was distribute of you other Relation - & in the hands of Strangers  
I can forgive him - I think he has enough to do at home - or rather  
less than enough - I was last summer I heard of this Connection by letters  
both from my Daughter & one from her husband - She tells me that  
she is very comfortable & happy - if not - she has to blame herself  
the match her own choice - I was out of the way to be consulted  
the fact is, she was happy to escape her wretched Relations - she  
wrought hard day & night in a Tavern which did not agree with  
her Constitution above all other dandying - she tells me -

With M<sup>r</sup>.

With Mr Donald & Mr Arthur the past 14 months - 7 of which she  
attended School a part of the day - The rest of the day & the greater  
part of the night, she attended the duties of her House, the Par.  
not excepted - After her marriage Mr Arthur sent his account  
against me to La Chine - in detail Merchants, Milliners, & Doctors  
Bills &c &c - Mr Keith put this account into the hands of Mr J.  
Sivright on his way up to Fort Conlonge - Mr Sivright found  
all these things cheerfully - but there was one item - would you  
believe it Sir - of £20. for Board wages - Mr J. offered to  
pay the money - but declared that in two hours time he would  
prosecute him not only for his Board, but for wages also  
& bring him in for heavy damages for making a Gentleman's  
Daughter his Par. maid - which I think would be just -  
Mr Arthur was happy to get clear by deducting the £20. &

Both Messrs Keith & Sivright write me - the former from London  
that her husband Angus Mr Donald is a fine looking young  
man - who bears a high Character for industry and ability in the  
line of his business - with plenty Customers - If I have an so - have  
I no reason - My much Reverend Sir - to be thankful that God brought  
life to her, as she was did not go astray - she must have good  
natural sense - to escape after the Death of Colonel Byrnie to the  
protection of Monsieur de Rouville - from the tyranny of an  
abandoned Aunt - I am under great obligation to Mr de Rouville,  
yet he had no occasion to write Mr. Courvoisier - his Brother Hubert  
wrote me, thus - "Il m'a été très agréable de votre lettre  
depuis la mort du Col. Byrnie. du moins, à la communication  
des Exécuteurs de sa Marguerite" - But the Books at La Chine  
on these things appear otherwise - and that £56. was disbursed

in the same time - Mr. Keith answered that Papaye in a very  
sprinkled manner, as he comes his high Station - Mr. de Rouville was  
under a Mistake, when he supposed that it was Capt. M. Cargo  
that had taken the Girl away without his Knowledge - Captain  
M. Cargo could not be guilty of that wickedness after refusing to  
receive her into his house when she was sent to him - Margaret writes  
a very sensible Letter - tho' the writing is indifferant - but not more  
than it may well be supposed - her husband writes a beautiful  
Hand - that would do Credit to some I could mention -

I owe you this Relation - after the humane & benevolent  
manner you were pleased to make enquiry after the Girl - Altho'  
Providence ordained otherwise, that she did not trouble you any  
farther, my Gratitude is not the less - and altho' I endeavoured  
to Express these in any last my hand could not do full Justice  
to what I felt & shall ever feel - for the worthy family of Fremont

My only son is now 19 years of age - and at School in Red River  
these 3 years - The accounts his Tutors give of him are very satisfac-  
tory - both in his Progress in Study & his natural disposition  
which is "full of Kindness & benignity" - as the Rev. Mr. Jones  
expresses me - that the - Tutor - is a good Arithmetician - and  
thoroughly understands Book Keeping - Geo graphy & Mathematics  
so far as he has gone in these branches of Study - he studies Latin  
& French - the latter at my earnest request, instead of the Latin - my  
being of opinion the Knowledge of the Latin tongue was absolute-  
ly necessary for a Boat's man in the Hon: Company's Service - The  
only fault he can ascribe to, when out of his Studies - It appears  
that the present Concession has sharned the Civil Mark  
upon all Boats in this Country - neither Education or natural  
abilities -

abilities give them nothing - But spite of the Cain mark - the Boy shall have as good an Education as the Red River Seminary can give him - I feel & you shall feel my own want of Education to thank his - some kind Providence put in my power to give him one - The young man himself, begged of me to allow him to study the Latin - assuring me that the studying of it will not be a drawback on any other branch of Education I may propose to him -

"The amiable & accomplished M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Callan" (for so he is called & is the assisting teacher -) assures me that Doctor's progress would do credit to both Tutor & Scholar of 4 years' schooling - This is the greatest blessing the Red River Colony confers upon us - & the sitting up of this Seminary we owe to my worthy friend & your relative - Capt. McKenzie - he was the first professor & is still its best supporter - having no less than 3 Boys & 3 Girls at the institution & is rearing up 4 more - To replace those, even as they are out of school - The Red River answers better in my opinion for natives of this Country than Montreal or any of the Canadas do - They are less liable to sickness - the temptations to evil are less - if they learn more of civilized life, at the same time they have more opportunities of learning many vices that are unknown as yet in R. River - no foreign vice made its way to any degree into that Country - 'Tis not entirely free but these are natural - they are seldom of any serious account - such as deserve a public execution -

If the will of a few individuals I thought good to keep me in the Back Ground that I might not acquire - a little money Providence was so kind as not to burden me with a large family my only other daughter lives with her mother here with me -



P.S. - I shall have an opportunity to send this in August to Bas de la Rivier - where it will get a safe passage to Lachine, free of postage - It shall be inclosed to the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Com<sup>rs</sup> Agents there, with a request to see it forwarded to Ferrisburgh - or any other place where it may find its way by private hand - I ask enough on a Gentleman to read it. Postage free - without any trifling postage for what is not worth a sentence - Even if not for I had cursed postage I would give you a couple Indian Anecdotes - which perhaps would not dis-

5.7.37

please you - The one is about a Sussex natural being that makes his descent <sup>into</sup> to our Indians - Turned out of mind - He grew more bold this summer - followed them every second morning - He seems to be harmless - Its size causes no small terror - R<sup>r</sup>. Burns's Death in D<sup>r</sup>. Hornbook - is a man skinned - The 'Armed' nearly alike for the Devil also has his "three such Cister out over on Shout his" but in stead of the "awful" scythe - 'Tis here an enormous Stake - The other is not an Anecdote nor imaginary - 'Tis a custom of strangulation among the East Indian Indians - They are so very fond of the pain of their relations, that on the least appearance of sickness - even a sore head - the father Bow - strings the son - the son the father - the mother the daughter & vice versa - in their just dress - 23

in them they set down a howl & lament the death of their dearest connections  
Point de vue de l'imagination in that quarter I can assure you Sir  
 I think it would be worth while for those that could do it - to draw up a  
 relation of so odd a custom - I have heard of the custom some years ago I thought  
 them it was of our occurrence - but a friend at East-India - wrote me last winter  
 that last several of his best Indians by the Bow-string, with large debts - &

Recd on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1837

May 16<sup>th</sup> April

To the Honorable



Mr. Richard MacKenzie

Fort Bonar

Lower Canada

~~The Honorable  
 the Secretary  
 of the Board  
 of Trade  
 & Plantations  
 Whitehall  
 London~~

Selection of Indian  
 spirit papers  
 1837

Mr. R. MacKenzie  
 Fort Bonar  
 Lower Canada

& I thought this same Bow-string cheated the Company out of thousands of  
 best skins - no attempt was ever made, to my knowledge to strangle the  
 barbarous custom - so it is - what is of daily occurrence - custom will make  
 familiar to both humane & savage - no more does a thief shoulder with his  
 brother thief on the Gallows - Does not this custom come nearly up to the  
 East India's sutlers? - I do not know enough of this to venture a full  
 description of it - & my friend was removed to another quarter this summer  
 a Mr. Spenser - I murder him - Extend Sir, a double portion of your  
 wonted indulgence to so insignificant a fellow as I am - Long life  
 health & prosperity be yours - is the Prayer of  
 Charles McKenzie



MCKENZIE, Charles

1837 5 jul Monontagua, à Hon. Roderick McKenzie,  
Terrebonne

Recommended to the politeness of James Frith Esquire,  
Lachine. ( Arrivée à Lachine le 15 mars 1838 et à  
Terrebonne le 16. Répondue le 16 avril. )

Dear and Revered Sir!

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your most inestimable favor of 20th April 1836 - which honored me here on the 10th Aug<sup>t</sup> last - for which mark of your continued kindness I can now pay - except so far as good wishes go - for your own welfare and that of every individual of your throng - amiable and large family - of which you had the condescension to mention to me by naming such - I thank you Sir - for this relation of your family - from the inner recess of my heart I thank you, in which my soul has a share - May they long continue to comfort your declining years - and may the goodness of a merciful God! add to their parents days to watch over their filial flock!

I hope you have received my last letter - which is very problematical - for safe passage of letters of late is very uncertain -

T'was in March last I received two letters of "Capt" Mackenzie's of date 1834 & 1835 - and I could mention others that took as long a time, tho' written not half so far off as Isle a la Cross is.

Here I am my dear Sir - if not entirely out of the world - so far out of it, as to have seldom any communication with any of the civilised part of it - "forgetting and forgot" - careless for the morrow - provided there be plenty fish in our nets - indifferent about Bailifs and Duns - executions and Shiriffs' Sales & all that - which are no small terror to so many thousands in the civilised world - we do better without these things - which if once established here, we would be apt to be caught the very first for we are not without our faults - we are the duns of the country.

There may not be many charms in the life we live in in this country - but will not custom familiarize? We all of us wish to be out of it - and no sooner we have that wish gratified then we would wish to return. 'Tis a failing in human nature not to be satis-

fied in any present state - when one object is gained another is open to the view, never before dreamt of. I hope there is a place where all these inordinate desires will be for ever at rest - & of a truth, that place must be beyond the Grave! We are under numerous necessities privations, and some cases of real misery occur - not known out of a savage country, we are debarred <sup>from</sup> of everything that makes life agreeable in a civilised state, the society of friend - the converse of wise men - "serene sights" and the improvements of arts, and man's ingenuity - and worst of all, we are deprived of hearing the Gospel preached. "And how can there be preachers, unless they are sent?" In recompense we are exempt from thousands of ills, diseases - and crimes, inseparable from civilised society in a populous city - Accidents by water occur not infrequent but seldom, or very rare, by Fire - and in a case of fire, none but the careless or guilty can suffer - not so in populous cities - tens of thousands of innocent and opulent people are brought to ruin in a few hours time by the negligency or crime of one individual - ce Braves who make the High-way the field of their action would lose their time here - but there have been cases of House breaking accompanied with murder

I believe that the idea generally is abroad, that the Indians live almost intirely upon carnage and blood, and that there is not a drop of the milk of humanity in their veins - that it is no crime therefore to run them down - even by blood Hounds ( as they have often been ) or any other means for their entire extermination. This idea is founded in error. No one even passed any length of time in their country without partaking of their hospitality - I often did it - to the very last month - <sup>ful</sup> they had in the world. While their own offsprings were crying for hunger - that Charity herself would forgive them were they to keep back the petum they could not well spare - There is another idea abroad as false as the former - that every Indian woman - or "squaw" must be an abandoned immodest being, whereas the truth is - that they carry real and natural modesty - to a higher degree than any class of women that ever existed - why - an Indian woman would suffer torture & death before she would suffer a "man-maid-wife" to examine her - Pardon me my fair country women - you are of more value than Gold is to Brass. I would only wish to put you right on a delicate subject, in a delicate point. Think better, and extend your charity towards these children of nature - consider what you yourselves would be, were you born under the

MCKENZIE, Charles

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..... same revolting and hard circumstances.

'Tis very fashionable of late among benevolent Ladies - to extend their charity to the furthermore corner of the world for fresh object of benevolence while no one thinks of the Red Man & his daughters. They are for many years under the British Government - of what that protection consists? They are all of them now under the protection of the H.B. Co.

The more I see of the Indian Character, the more I admire it. Their poverty, their necessities, their resignation, their patience under every hardship - their improvident way of living - their want of foresight and carelessness for the future - Why Sir - every Indian from ten years old to his Grave is a philosopher - That they are disentful and not to be trusted on every occasion, cannot be denied but we cannot be surprised - considering - that neither Gails nor the powerful arm of the Maw can restrain the vicious part of mankind in the civilised world.

I trust Sir that you will have the goodness to excuse this long digression about the Indians & the Indian life. The fault is your own, for you have often been pleased to mention a certain delight my letters afforded you - if so - en vérité monsieur vous êtes pas bien difficile a vous contenter - few besides yourself would deign to read my poor stuff - & I seldom write letters of late. I am an entire stranger to all our chief men in this country - there are not more than three or four of the Chief Factors whom I know personally.

I am not surprised that you found the Company of an old N. Wester very agreeable in an evening after the duties of the day in a noisy House of Parliament where politics run so high - as at Quebec - besides Mr John Dugal Cameron is a most respectable & well informed gentleman as you observe of him - fine I fear ( ? ) from this country that so much could be said - yet there are some - They have more leisure to study than in by gone days - I mean those who have good books and are inclined to study them.

As you have seen my cousin 'Squire<sup>McHenry</sup> of Rivière aux Ruisons you must have heard of my "fair connections of Bytown" - for he was always a gossip - tho' he

never enquired after that connection when she was destitute of even other situation & in the hands of strangers. I can forgive him. I think he has enough to do at home - or rather less than enough. 'T'was last summer I heard of this connection by letter both from my daughter & one from her husband. She tells me that she is very comfortable & happy - if not - she has to blame herself ~~the~~ match her own choice. I was out of the way to be consulted the fact is, she was happy to escape her needy relations - she wrought hard day & night in a Tavern which did not agree with her constitution above all other drudging - she tells me. With Mr Donald McArthur she past 14 months - 7 of which she attended school a part of the day & the greatest part of the night. She attended the duty of his House, the Bar not excepted. After her marriage McArthur sent his account against me to Lachine - in detail - merchants, millars & Doctors Bills &c &c. Mr Keith put this account into the hands of Mr. T. Sivright on his way up to Fort Coulonge. Mr Sivright paid all these items cheerfully - but there was one item - would you believe it Sir - of £20 for Board wages. Mr. S. offered to pay the money but declared that in two hours time he would prosecute him not only for his board, but for wages also & bring him in for heat damages for making a Gentlemans Daughter his Bar-Maid - which I think would be just. McArthur was happy to get clear by deducting the £20.

Both Messrs Keith & Sivright write me - the former from London that her husband Angus McDonald is a fine looking young man - who bears a high character for industry and ability in the line of his business - with plenty customers - if things are so - have I no reason, my much Revered Sir, to be thankful that a girl brought up here & there, as she was did not go astray. She must have good natural sense to escape after the death of Colonel Byrne to the protection of Monsieur de Rouville - from the tyranny of an abandoned aunt - I am under great obligation to Mr de Rouville, yet he had no occasion to make Mr. Coursolles - his Notary Public - write me, thus - "Il n'a été recu aucun argent de votre part depuis la mort du Col. Byrne - du moins, a la connaissance des Executeurs ni de Marguerite" - But the Books at Lachine made things appear otherwise and that £56 were disbursed in the mean time. Mr Keith answered that passage in a very splendid manner, as become his high station. Mr de Rouville was

McKENZIE, Charles

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1837 5 jul ( Suite )

under a mystake, when he supposed that it was Capt. McCargo that had taking the Girl away without his knowledge. Capt. McCargo could not be guilty of that weakness after refusing to secure her into his house when she was sent to him. Marguerite writes a very sensible letter - tho' the writing is indifferent - but not more than it may well be supposed - her husband writes a beautiful hand - that would do credit to some I could mention.

I owe you this relation - after the Humane & benevolent manner you were pleased to make inquiring about the girl - Altho' Providence ordained otherwise, that she did not trouble you any further, my gratitude is not the less - and altho' I endeavoured to express these in my last my hand could not do full justice to what I felt & shall ever feel - for the worthy family of Terrebonne.

My only son is now 19 years of age - and at school in Red River these 3 years. The accounts his tutors give of him are very satisfactory - both in his progress in Study & his natural disposition which is "full of kindness & benignity", as the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Jones assures me " that he - Hector - is a good Arithmetician - and thoroughly understands Book Keeping - Geography & Mathematics so far as he has gone in these branches of study - he studies latin & French - the latter at my earnest request, instead of the Latin - not being of opinion the knowledge of the Latin tongue was absolutely necessary for a Boat'sman in the Hon. Company's service - the only berth he can aspire to, when out of his studies. It appears that the present concern has stamped the Cain mark upon all born in this country - neither education or natural abilities serve them nothing. But spite of the Cain mark, the Boy shall have as good an education as the Red River Seminary can give him. I felt & ever shall feel my own want of education to start his - since kind Providence put in my power to give him one. The young man himself, begged of me to allow him to study the Latin - assuring me that the studying of it will not be a drawback on any other branch of education I may propose to him.

"The amiable & accomplished Mr Mc Callam"<sup>x</sup> ( for so he is called & is the assisting teacher ) assures me that Hector's progress would do credit to both tutor

<sup>Marguerite (épouse de John Charles)</sup>  
x McCallum, John, aidant sa soeur, dans l'école de la Rivière Rouge. ( Sylvia Von Kirk, "Mammy Tender ties", p. 189)

& scholar of 7 years' schooling. This is the greatest blessing the Red River Colony conferred upon us & the setting up of this seminary we owe to my worthy friend & your relative Capt McKenzie. He was the first proposer & is still its best supporter - having no less than 3 Boys & 3 Girls at the institution & is rearing up 4 more to replace those, soon as they are out of school. The Red River answers better in my opinion for natives of this country than Montreal or any of the Canadas do. They are less liable to sickness - the temptations to evil are less - if they learn more of civilised life, at the same time they have more opportunities of learning many vices that are unknown as yet in Red River. No foreign vice has made its way to any degree into that country - 'tis not entirely free but these are natural - they are seldom of any serious aggravation - such as deserve a public execution.

If the will of a few individuals thought good to keep me in the Back ground that I might not acquire a little money, providence was so kind as not to burden me with a large family, my only other daughter lives with her mother here with me.

I was going to observe, that had Mr Alexr your son entered on extensive business of his own, I had a mind to send Hector down to him, with a small provision for the Lad's support until such time as he could be of some service.

I have been informed that Mr Donald McKenzie was wishing to dispose of his property on Lake & retiring into one of the Canadas. Surprising! Him that was so proud of American institutions, its freedom - its liberties & the numerous other blessings attendant on such a state of Government - should not relish a little "Lynch Law" now and then - or a turn out in support of "States rights" or more payment a sum out to drive the Natives - foreigners I should say Wt ( ? ) of Mississippi - possession breaks the charm - high s ding woods - have charmed many a british subject into an American citizen who regretted the exchange.

As to your canadian politics they are beyond any little knowledge I possess. My Lord Gosford seem determined to give a certain party every thing they ask - for which they seem as thankful in return. They are easy satisfied. Mons<sup>r</sup> Papineau & his prototype, Daniel O'Connell, are mild spoken men - they want a little of their own way - the one would con-

McKENZIE, Charles

1837 5 jul ( Suite )

tent himself with Ireland - for his share - & the other - with L. Canada at his disposal - to divide the spoils among "Les Enfants du Sol".

This scrawl must cease - and every must cease, but the respect & esteem I have towards the Honble Roderick McKenzie & all that concern him, shall laste as long as my life.

Believe me truly be - Hon. & Revered Sir - your ever obliged and humble debtor - &c &c - I shall not apologize - having hardly space enough to lay my humble respects at the amiable Mrs McKenzie's feet.

p.s. I shall have an opportunity to send this in August, Bas de la Rivière, where it shall get a safe passage to Lachine, free of postage. It shall be inclosed to the Honble Companys Agent there, with a request to see it forwarded to Terrebonne - or any other place where it may find its way by private hands.

I ask enough on a gentleman to read it - postage free - without paying tripple postage for what is not worth a six pence. Were it not for that cursed postage I would give you a couple Indian Anecdots - which perhaps would not displese you. The one is about a Super~~nat~~ natural being that makes his d visit to our Indians - time out of mind. He grew more bold this summer - followed them - way soon this morning. He seems to be harmless - its size causes no small terror. Rt Burns' death in Dr Hornbook is a mere shadow - tho' armed nearly alike for this devil also has his "

" but instead of the "awfu' scythe" 'tis here an enormous hatchet.

The other is not an anecdote - nor imaginary - 'tis a custom of strangulation among the East Main Indians. They are so very tender of the pain of their relations, that on the least appearance of sickness - even a sore head - the father Bow-strings the son - the son the father - the mother the daughter & vice versa - in their first sleep & then they sit down & howl & lament the death of their dearest connections point du mal de imaginaire in that quarter I can assure you sir I think it would be worth while - for those that could do it - to draw up a relation of so

old a custom. I have heard of the custom some years ago. I thought then it was of sure occurrence - but a friend at East Main - wrote me last winter that last (?) several of his best Indians by the Bow string, with large debts - & through this same Bow string cheated the Company out of thousands of best skins - no attempt was ever made to my knowledge to strangle the barbarous custom - so it is - what is of daily occurrence - custom will make familiar to both human & savage - no more does a thief shudder at his brother thief on the gallows. Does not this custom come nearly up to the East Indians' Suttees? (?) I do not know enough of this to mention a full description of it - & my friend was removed to another quarter this summer a Mr Spiner (?) - succeeds him.

Extend Sir, a double portion of your wanted indulgence to so insignificant a fellow as I am. Long life health & prosperity be yours - is the prayer of

Charles McKenzie

Arch H M

I ask enough on a gentleman to read it - postage free - without paying triple postage for what is not worth a six pence. Were it not for that cursed postage I would give you a couple Indian Anecdotes - which perhaps would not displease you. The one is about a Suvereign's natural being that makes his visit to our Indians - time out of mind. He grew more bold this summer - followed them - way soon this morning. He seems to be harmless - its size causes no small terror. R. Burns' death in Dr Hornbrook is a mere shadow - tho' aimed nearly alike for this de- all also has his " " but instead of the "swin" say- the " 'tis here an enormous hatchet.

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Montague 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1835

107  
The Honorable Rob<sup>t</sup>. Mackenzie

Revered and honored Sir

I have been duly honored with your several favors of April/34 - which I received here in August last - for which I am truly thankful beyond what I can express - but not beyond my faith in your Condiscension - The enclosed letter from my poor Sister afforded me great satisfaction - tho' that satisfaction might be somewhat of a melancholy nature

That this letter was found among the papers of your late brother, & my lamented friend - was that he received it in a season when the communication to the B. C. Country was cut short - got among loose papers and escaped his notice - your opening the letter sir - is to me another proof of your esteem & regards towards me, & that nothing that concerns me is indifferent to you - My Confidence & faith did not require a new mode

Letters from "home" - are generally of one kind - they either breathe of Poverty, or Encouragement to come out to "America" - a word, & idiom, which entered the heads of some of these old women of 80 years of Age poor people! little do they know what misery is before them - before they can sit down in the midst of an American forest - you tell me, my dear sir, that your orations & tracts to come out to Canada: in the hopes - no doubt, that yourself & your brothers can do wonders for them - I do not know how much you or either of you, would wish to do for them - but this I think, that if each of you were he stripped himself of his daily bought earnings, that you could, <sup>at</sup> satisfy their avidity - I do not think at the same time that this is Expedient - Let them be

thoud'ful, as I am, that there is a friend left them at  
Lisbon - help in the Councils of America  
tho' he may have no Cash to spare every Claim  
which would, indeed, exhaust the Treasures of a  
~~Country~~ I do not exactly know - that such Claims  
were made upon you - but I believe you are not  
exempt from such to this very day - Since I - poor  
I have been solicited from year to year for pecuniary  
aid & supplies - My sister now asked me direct  
for any - because I took care to be before hand with  
her in these matters - while I had no family of my  
own - I have indeed sent her & some others of my  
relations - time from time from this Country £137  
Sterling - what are they the better for it I never learnt  
except their Complaints are more loud -

I read your letter with a sorrowful heart - yet these  
things must come to pass, for there is none exempt - but  
let me trust in the Goodness of the Lord - whose word  
can shut the Mouth of the Grave, repair the decay  
of nature, & restore the Vigour of Youth - after the Art of  
the Urnt had been exhausted - Let us trust therefore  
in that ruling wisdom - & that it served good in this  
sight to restore you to a share of your wonted good  
health - Alas! My dear Sir - with you I fear, that  
that Connection which existed between our families for  
three Generations will finish or end - & tho' this Connection  
was no more than the Craving of dependents on the  
independent, there was something in it of more worth  
than there is to be found now a days - in such Connections  
& your own behaviour toward myself from the beginning  
proves how much you have departed of the honorable  
sentiments of your Ancestors - I much regret that I did  
not get acquainted with your Son Alexander when  
I was down - for I would endeavour to make this Connection  
go one Link farther - I am the father of an only Son - who

who is in Red River at School these two years - & were I able  
to give him a finished Education. I could hardly procure  
for him. The situation of a Common labourer in the Hon.  
Company's Service I am unknown & friendly in Canada  
& almost the same in this Country. The most of those of  
your time - & of my youth - left, or are on the eve of leaving  
the Country, & I am a stranger to their Successors. Yet  
I cannot leave the Country as long as I am worth keeping.

The Girl of whom I spoke to you in my letter of two  
years ago - is now at Bytown - a Relation of her own  
took her away from where she had been for some years  
a Mr Donald McArthur - a son of Peter McArthur  
of Glengary, Upper Canada. where she meets with  
better treatment than she had hitherto received in Canada.  
I have here my younger Daughter & my wife with me  
for my family consists of two daughters & a Boy - and  
I have reason to be thankful to kind Providence, that  
the family is not larger - since the means of supporting  
a large family was denied me - You will excuse  
me I'm sure for entering on family subjects I often  
felt sorry & somewhat disappointed that you never  
said a word to me on the subject of your lovely family  
I dared not to complain - for less than the notice you  
were pleased to bestow upon me - were an honor to the  
first Character in this Country - but not a word of  
this, that the Arrow that would sting any of these little  
ones belonging to you - would on that account enter  
the breast of Charles McArthur - & that any piece of good  
fortune that may come to the Lot of either of them  
will equally interest me - & at their prosperity I shall  
rejoice - as long as memory is left me. It certainly  
was my intention - to send my Boy "Victor" at length  
down to your Son Alexander - to make of him as he  
might think proper - & it was not the want of faith,  
but that of opportunity, that prevented this taking  
place -

I did not intend in my dream of Mrs. Kent to see  
the Boy down to Alex<sup>de</sup> as a <sup>dear</sup> brother to him - I intended  
to make him some allowance from this Country - believe  
dear Sir - that I would soon see him tumbling  
Bales Goods in a whole Sale Store in Montreal  
through the street handling an Oar in the Snow Company  
I swore - but these are dreams of the moment that will  
never bring forth any fruit - As to my own self  
I have been in a poor state of health for some years  
back - but this last winter, & untill the middle of the  
Present month - few of these about me thought  
that I would live to this date - but the goodness  
of the Lord brought me Round - I'm still in a  
weak State - I have been often troubled by Indispositions  
I set down to this State, & they are now coming in, in quantity  
so I must conclude - in the sincerest wish, & trust that  
this may find you & your family in the full enjoy-  
ment of perfect health - the greatest Gift that Heaven  
can bestow on Man - I have the honor to be

My Dear Sir

with respect & regard

Your much indebted

Humble Servant

Charles McKinnon

P.S. Remember me most respectfully to Mrs. McKinnon  
& the rest of her lovely family -

I have learned, with trembling & horror, that the Chero-  
kees had another deadly visit to Lower Canada last  
Summer - where it had no respect for Persons - & that  
Thousands fell victims to its insatiable rage! -



McKENZIE, Charles

1835 22 mai Monontagua, à Hon. Rod. McKenzie, TB

Reverend & Honored Sir

I have been duly honored with your several favors of April/34 which I received here in August last - for which I am truly thankful beyond what I can express - but not beyond my faith in your condescension. The enclosed letter from my poor sister afforded me great satisfaction - tho' that satisfaction might be somewhat of a melancholy matter.

That this letter was found among the papers of your late brother, & my lamented friend was that he received it in a season when the communication to the N. W. country was cut short - got among loose papers and escaped his notice. Your opening the letter sir is to me another proof of your esteem & regards towards me, & that nothing that concerns me is indifferent to you. My confidence & faith did not require a new mark.

Letters from "home" are generally of one tenour they either breathe of poverty, or encouragement to come out to "America", a word & idea which entered the heads of some of these old women of 80 years of age. Poor people! Little do they know what misery is before them - before they can sit down in the midst of an American forest.

You tell me my dear sir that your relations threaten (?) to come out to Canada in the hopes - no doubt, that yourself & your brothers can do wonders for them. I do not know how much you or either of you would wish to do for them, but this I think that if such of you were to strip himself of his deadly bought earnings, that you could not satisfy their avidity. I do not think at the same time that this is expedient. Let them be thankful, as I am, that there is a friend left them at Terrebonne, high in the counsels of Canada tho' he may have no cash to spare every claimant which would, indeed, exhaust the treasures of a Cresus. I do not exactly know that such claims were made upon you, but I believe you are not exempt from such to this very day, since I, poor I, have been solicited from year to year for procuring aids & supplies. My sister never asked me direct for any, because I took care to be beforehand with her in these matters, while I had no family of my own. I have indeed sent her & some others of my relations, time from time from this country £137 sterling. What are they the better for it I never learnt except their complaints are more

loud.

I read your letters with a sorrowful head - yet these things must come to pass, for there is non exempt - but let me trust in the goodness of the Lord! whose word can shut the mouth of the Grave, repair the decays of nature & restore the vigour of youth - after the art of the learnt had been exhausted. Let us trust therefore in that ruling wisdom & that it seemed good in His sight to restore you a share of your wanted good health. Alas! My dear Sir, with you I fear that that connection which existed between our families for three generations will finish or end - & tho this connexion was no more that the leaning of dependents on the independent, there was something in it of more worth than there is to be found nowadays, in such connexions & your own behaviour toward myself from the beginning proves how much you have inherited of the honorable sentiments of your Ancestors.

I much regret that I did not get acquainted with your son Alexandor when I was down, for I would endeavour to make this connexion go one link farther.

I am the father of an only Boy, who is in ~~the~~ Red River at school these two years, & were I able to give him a finished education, I could hardly procure for him the situation of a common labourer in the Hon. company's service. I am unknown & friendless in Canada & almost the same in this Country. The most of those of your time, & of my youth, left, or are on the eve of leaving the Country, & I am a stranger to their successors. Yet I cannot leave the Country as long as I am worth keeping.

The Girl I spoke to you in my letter of two years ago is now at Bytown. A relation of her own took her away from where she had been for some years, a Mr. Donald McArthur - a son of Peter McArthur of Gleggarry, Upper Canada, where she meets with better treatment than she had hitherto received in Canada.

I have here my younger daughter & my wife with me for my family consists of two daughters & a Boy, and I have reason to be thankful to kind Providence, that the family is not larger, since the means of supporting a large family was denied me.

You will excuse me reverend sir for entering on family subjects. I often <sup>felt</sup> sorry & somewhat disappointed that you never said a word to me on the subject

of your lovely family. I dared not to complain - far (?) less than the notice you were pleased to bestow upon me - were an honor to the first character in this Country - but rest assured of this, that the arrow that would sting any of these little ones belonging to you would on that account enter the breast of Charles McKenzie, & that any piece of good fortune that may come to the lot of either of them will equally interest me & at their prosperity I shall rejoice as long as memory is left me.

It certainly was my intention to send my Boy "Hector Angus" down to your son Alexander to make of him as he might think proper, & it was not the want of faith but that of opportunity that prevented that taking place.

I did not intend in my dreams of this kind to send the Boy down to Alex<sup>er</sup> as a burden on him. I intended to make him some allowances from this country. Believe dear sir that I would sooner see him tumbling Bales goods in a wholesale store in Montreal than to see him handling an oar in the Hon Company's service. But these are dreams of the moment that will never bring forth any fruit.

As to my own self I have been in a poor state of health for some years back - but this last winter, & until the midst of the present month, few of those about me thought that I would live to this date, but the goodness of the Lord brought me round - tho' still in a weak state. I have been often troubled by Indians since I sat down to this sheet, & they are now coming in in numbers so I must conclude - in the sincerest wish & trust that this may find you & your family in the full enjoyment of perfect health, the greatest gift that heaven can bestow on man.

I have the honor to be

My dear Sir

with respect & regard

your much indebted

Humble Servant

Charles McKenzie

P.S. Remember me most respectfully to Mrs. McKenzie & the rest of her lovely family. I have learned,



4

with trembling horror, that the Cholera morbus paid another deadly visit to Lower Canada last summer - where it had no respect for persons - & that thousands fell victims to its insatiated rage!

Arch H M

A l'endos: Recommended to the politeness

James Frith Esqr

Lachine

Reque à Montréal le 14 octobre 1835 et à Terrebonne le même jour

Charles McKenzie avait épouse Mary, fille de William McKay et de Josette Latour, (Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties", p. 110) aucune épouse de John Haldane (Lb. F pp. 110 et 120)

voir aux ~~McKenzie~~ Public Archives Canada les Charles McKenzie Papers -

Lac Seul, à environ 250 m. au nord de Fort William, sur la Rivière aux Anglais qui se déverse au sud du lac Winnipeg  
voir "Cie du Nord-Ouest" vol I index (R. R. R. R. R.)

with respect & regard

your much indebted

Humble Servant

Charles McKenzie

P.S. Remember me most respectfully to Mrs. McKenzie & the rest of her lovely family. I have learned,

May 22, 1835.

I have been duly honored with your several favors of April/34 - which I received here in August last - for which I am truly thankful beyond what I can express - but not beyond my faith in your condescension. The inclosed letter from my poor Sister afforded me great satisfaction - tho' that satisfaction might be somewhat of a melancholy nature that this letter was found among the papers of your late brother, & my lamented friend - was that he received it in a season when the communication to the N.W. country was cut short - got among loose papers and escaped his notice - your opening the letter sir is to me another proof of your esteem & regards towards me & that nothing that concerns me is indifferent to you. My confidence & faith did not require a new mark. Letters from "home" are generally of one tenour. They either breathe of poverty, or encouragement to come out to "America" a word, & idea which entered the heads of some of these old women of 80 years of age. Poor people! Little do they know what misery is before them - before they can sit down in the midst of an American forest. You tell me, my dear sir, that your relations threaten to come out to Canada? in the hopes - no doubt, that yourself & your brothers can do wonders for them. I do not know how much you or either of you, would wish to do for them - but this I think, that if such of you were to strip himself of his dearly bought earnings, that you could not satisfy their avidity. I do not think at the same time that this is expedient(?). Let them be

[2]

thankful, as I am, that there is a friend left them at Terrebonne - high in the counsels of Canada tho' he may have no cash to spare every claimant which would, \_\_\_\_\_ exhaust the treasure of a Croesus(?). I do not exactly know that such claims were made upon you - but I believe you are not exempt from such to this very day - since I - poor I, have been solicited from year to year for pressing aids & supplies. My sister never asked me direct for any - because I took care to be before hand with her in these matters - while I have no family of my own - I have indeed sent her & some others of my relations - time from time from this country L137 sterling. What are they the better for it I never learnt except their complaints are more loud. I read your letters with a sorrowful \_\_\_\_ yet these things must come to pass, for there is none exempt - but let me trust in the goodness of the Lord! whose word can shut the mouth of the grave, repose the decays of nature, & restore the vigour of youth - after the art of the \_\_\_\_\_ had been exhausted. Let us trust therefore in that ruling wisdom & that it seemed good in his sight to restore you to a share of your wanted good health. Alas! my dear sir - with you I fear that that connexion which existed between our families for three generations will perish or end - & tho' this connexion was no more than the leaning of dependent on the independent, there was something in it of more worth than there is to be found now-a-days - in such connexions & your own behavior toward myself from the beginning proves how much you have inherited of the honourable sentiments of your Ancestors. I much regret that I did not get acquainted with your son Alexander when I was down - for I would endeavour to make this connexion go one link farther. I am the father of an only boy - who

[3]

is in Red River at school these two years - & were I able to give him a finished education I could hardly procure for him the situation of a common labourer in The Hon. Companys service. I am unknown & friendless in Canada & almost the same in this country. The most of those of your time & of my youth left, or are on the eve of leaving the country, & I am a stranger to their successors. Yet I cannot leave the country as long as I am worth keeping. The girl of whom I spoke to you in my letter of two years ago is now at Bytown. A relation of her own took her away from where she had been for some years a Mr. Donald McArthur - a son of Peter McArthur of Glengarry, Upper Canada where she meets with better treatment than she had hitherto received in Canada. I have here my younger daughter & my wife with me for my family consists of two daughters & a boy - and I have reason to be thankful to kind providence, that the family is not larger - since the means of supporting a large family was denied me. You will excuse me reverend sir - for entering on family subjects. I often felt sorry, & somewhat disappointed that you never said a word to me on your lovely family. I darest not to complain - for less than the notice you were pleased to bestow upon me - were an honor to the first character in this country - but rest assured of this, that the arrow that would sting any of these little ones belonging to you would on that account enter the breast of Charles McKenzie

- & that any piece of good fortune that may come to the lot of either of them will equally interest me - & at their prosperity I shall rejoice as long as memory is left me. It certainly was my intention to send my boy "Hector Angus" down to your son Alexander to make of him as he might think proper - & it was not the want of faith, but that of opportunity that prevented this taking place

[4]

I did not intend in my dreams of this kind to send the boy down to Alexdr as a burden on him. I intended(?) to make him some allowances from this country. Believe dear sir - that I would sooner see him tumbling bales goods in a wholesale store in Montreal than to see him handling an oar in the Hon. Companys service - but these are dreams of the moment that will never bring forth any fruit. As to my own self I have been in a poor state of health for some years back - but this last winter, untill the midst of the present month. Few of those about me thought that I would live to this date - but the goodness of the Lord brought me round - tho' still in a weak state. I have been often troubled by Indians since I sat down to this sheet, & they are now coming in in numbers so I must conclude - in the sincerest wish & trust that this may find you & your family in the full enjoyment of perfect health - the greatest gift that heaven can bestow on man. I have the honor to be My Dear Sir with respect & regard your much indebted Humble Servant Charles McKenzie

P.S. Remember me most respectfully to Mrs. McKenzie & the rest of her lovely family.

I have learned, with trembling & horror, that the cholera morbus paid another deadly visit to Lower Canada last summer where it had no respect for persons - & that thousands fell victims to its insatiated rage!

Montreal, 16 Nov. 1987

Dear Mr McLaren,

Your letter of 28 November 1986 is very interesting. I quite understand that it was difficult for you to express a definite opinion on Charles McKenzie's poem, given the poor quality of the photocopy. I do not want to cause you any trouble with that matter, but should that member of your department, whom you mentioned, feel inclined to have a look at that material, I certainly do not have any objection to formulate.

I do not know yet if I will make use of that poem in my present research on Roderick McKenzie, which I am trying since months and months to materialize in some way. I have too much work presently ahead of me to set any date for any early publication.

Please accept my apologies for this late answer to your kind letter, as well as my best wishes for this New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Henri Masson



28. xi. 86

Dear Mr. Masson:

Thank you for your letter of 3 November and for your generous remarks concerning the essay which Warren Suher passed along to you. As well, I welcome your enquiry concerning the Mackenzie poem, and apologize for such a tardy reply: I have been out of town.

Given the date of composition at 1843, I should think that the trader/port might well have had in mind Sir Walter Scott's highlands poem The Lady of the Lake (1810). Like his novels, Scott's poetry enjoyed great contemporary renown and this particular poem, as it happens, was the first piece of literature translated into the Mohawk-Mohawk tongue after The New Testament. So it was popular in Canada.

I am afraid that the photostat is not easy to read, so I will not hazard any final estimation. As well, I am not as familiar with Fingallian material as I might be. A member of our department who does know it to some extent is currently on leave; I will ask him to have a look at the specimen when he returns in January — unless, of course, you prefer that no one else see the material.

Have you plans to publish your poem? I take the liberty of enquiring because the colleague to whom I have alluded is organizing a conference next August on Sir Walter Scott and his influence and Times, a portion of which will be devoted to Scott's influence in Canada. Clearly, a poem such as yours might provide a valuable contribution to discussion. Of course, the decision is entirely your own: I merely wish to apprise you of the conference.

I shall be in touch if and when other sources of literary inspiration for Mackenzie's poem arise. Please give my regards to Warren. Again thank you for writing.

Yours truly,

Bill Mac

Tel & Warren re address McLaren

3 Mar. 1986

Dear M. McLaren

our common friend, Warren Baker, gave me a photostat copy of your "literary landscapes in the writing of four poets", the day I went <sup>up</sup> to his attic <sup>where I also</sup> met Hugh MacMillan.

What prompted him to do so was a poem, <sup>I have in my files,</sup> by Charles Mackenzie while stationed at Lac Seul in 183- ~~was~~ entitled.

"The story of Dermot Mac Jurl a renowned chieftain among the Fingallians, his amour with Grania N.E. Aturich and their tragical death".

I was wondering <sup>at</sup> what <sup>at</sup> what source of <sup>literary</sup> inspiration <sup>(Robert Mackenzie)</sup> Mackenzie turned to in order to write ~~this~~ the eight pages of his ~~the~~ saga, the first and last pages of which ~~(eight in all)~~ are attached in photostats form. ~~and~~ Warren suggested that I turn to you for ~~an answer~~ your opinion.

I found your notes very enlightening and useful specially with all those <sup>references</sup> ~~notes~~ appended to show your sources.

Narratives of travel and exploration include an appreciable creative component that is ignored by those, literary critics no less than historians, who treat them only as chronicles. Moreover, besides providing the basis for the development of several national literatures, including Canada's,<sup>1</sup> such narratives, as any brief survey, say, of eighteenth-century English novels will immediately point up, have provided many writers of belles lettres with their themes, structures, and even, as in the admittedly extreme case of Swift's yahoos, characterization.<sup>2</sup> However, as fascinating as the influence of travel literature on other writing is, this paper will attempt to delineate in the narratives of four fur traders the other direction in the symbiotic relation between creative writers and travel writers. Specifically, the journals of Tolmie, McLean, Black, and Thomas Simpson will be considered for their creations, through allusion to English and classical literature, of literary landscapes out of Canadian wilderness terrain.

Such creations aided the Britons in attempts to manufacture a sense of place out of the landscapes through which they travelled or in which they resided. Long before Canadian writers would begin to turn to aboriginal themes and nature symbolism out of a felt need to live not just in but with the landscape, itinerant fur traders strove in their writing to make land into psychologically comforting landscapes by deploying the aesthetics of English landscape appreciation, especially the Picturesque and the Sublime. Two examples from fur-trade writing which are well known can help to demonstrate that the Picturesque, the late eighteenth-century British aesthetic by which travellers to any part of the world enjoyed nature as if it were a series of landscape paintings, was widely deployed to consecrate wilderness terrain as somehow British.

The first is Alexander Mackenzie's famous description of the view of the Clearwater River valley from the coxcomb of the Methye Portage.<sup>3</sup> This description,



we now guess with W. Kaye Lamb, Franz Montgomery, and others, was penned by William Combe, the great satirist of landscape touring and never himself a traveller to North America. Rather than any detailed examination of the description, which has been undertaken elsewhere in any case,<sup>4</sup> it is needful to stress that the pervasive deployment of the Picturesque at the time of British imperial commercial expansion issued in a conflation of landscapes on every continent into similarly prescribed views of foregrounds animated by docile people or animals, sunken middle grounds intersected by a gently meandering river and shaded by generic foliage, and backgrounds of distant blue hills which closed the space in a mood of repose. Combe did not have to escape from debtors' prison in London in order to make just such a picture out of the topography of northern Saskatchewan, and while the whistling of rutting elk and the shine of an upturned canoe provide local colour, the paragraph's structure and mood precisely uphold the demands of picturesque landscape representation.

The second example comes from Sir George Simpson's Narrative of a journey round the world (1847), ghost-written by A. Barclay and Adam Thom, the Scottish-born editor of the Montreal Herald who had assisted Lord Durham in the preparation of his Report. As Arthur S. Morton pointed out some years ago in his biography of Simpson, the narrative's description of the shores of Rainy River as delightfully "favourable for agriculture,"<sup>5</sup> was brought forward by Gladstone, Russell, and others at the Parliamentary inquiry of 1857 to provide proof against Simpson's claim that the fur trade empire/wilderness defied settlement and cultivation.<sup>6</sup> The genre of travel literature, which, after 1770, came to be read as much for the pleasurable engagement of the traveller's sensibilities as for its record of phenomena witnessed and information gleaned,<sup>7</sup> was expected by a British readership to include landscape descriptions in picturesque terms. While the Rainy River

had elicited pleasurable responses from Henry the Elder and many other traders before Simpson,<sup>8</sup> Simpson presumably had retained his ghost-writers, just as Mackenzie had, precisely to meet literary expectations that he felt lay beyond him; but because the Picturesque was England's cherished aesthetic for understanding man's harmonious relations with the external world, to deploy it in describing terrain that Simpson wanted left unsettled was a risky business indeed. Hyperbole only added fat to Simpson's fire, for at one point his narrative likened the banks of Rainy River to "those of the Thames near Richmond."<sup>9</sup>

These two well-known landscape descriptions, written almost fifty years apart, help to set the context for equally interesting if less well-known landscapes of fur-trade literature. Although William Fraser Tolmie (1812-1886) is remembered for many other reasons and not least for his efforts to establish a lending library for fur traders on the Pacific slope, it would be remiss of any writer to overlook his first response to North American landscapes. After a lengthy ocean passage from England during which he spent much time poring over Addison's essays on the pleasures of the imagination and other treatises of eighteenth-century aesthetics, Tolmie was paddled up the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver on 2 May 1833. Rather than indulging in a composition of the shoreline landscapes in the light of falling day, the landscape enthusiast's favourite hour, Tolmie kept his head down, searching in a volume of Cowper's Table Talk for metrical improprieties.<sup>10</sup> The fear of wilderness nature has seldom issued in odder practices. Gradually, of course, Tolmie habituated himself to a new natural order, though it can be said with some certainty that his writing shows him to have been more intent upon making North American nature over into his British conception of it than upon adapting his perception to its unique qualities. Thus, he describes the meadow at Nisqually, Puget Sound, where he was sent on 30 May to establish a new post, as a possible estate park of the Lancelot "Capability" Brown type:

A beautiful walk of more than a mile could be formed along the face of this hill, until it should terminate in the vale of Nusqually, & with a slight aid from the axe, splendid prospects obtained. I have not explored the bank on the north side of the streamlet, but probably there, a road could be much further prolonged & when tired of the shady wood you could emerge into the boundless prairie, to which any nobleman's park in which I have been cannot once be compared either in size, beauty or magnificence. (p. 197)

Tolmie's stay at Nisqually was short-lived; by Christmas 1833 he was stationed (exiled, he felt) at Fort McGloughlin (near modern Bella Bella, B.C.). Like Vancouver's crews and many other Britons before and after him, he greeted with mournful regret the northern British Columbia coastline, especially because its vertical sublimity precluded the imaginative appropriation of it as in any way picturesque. Again he reverted to reading and writing about what he had read. Although he reminds himself that he "must soon write a description of the country around Ft. McL." (p. 266), he spends his time and ink instead on Johnson's Lives of the Poets, and Shakespeare's histories and comedies (keeping the tragedies prudently at bay).

His aesthetic prospects brightened, however, when, after a dreary five months, he sailed up the coast with Peter Ogden to resituate Fort Simpson in Graham Sound. Tolmie discovered the site which answered the requisites of construction, navigation, commerce, defense, and aesthetics:

. . . there is a good sized burn, . . . Followed its course for some distance upwards--its banks are level & all around there is an abundance of tall pines, no scarcity of picket wood. . . . On Monday morning Anderson & I landed with the men & commenced a war of extermination agt. the "leafy denizens of the Forest"--a barricade of fallen trees was formed, within which we all encamped in the evening--the men in huts formed of branches & we in tents. It was a lovely evening & I think a landscape painter would have found a good subject for his brush in our encampment "under the greenwood tree"--the ample bay with its woody islets & rocks & the surrounding peaked & snow dappled mountains--the felled trees--grass & herbs had then the freshness & verdure of life . . . . (pp. 287-88)

A small stream (burn) and its level banks furnish the makings of a picturesque