

government would be established. I found myself adopting a completely different attitude. It had now become a personal matter by the loss of two winters' labour in trapping and trading.

The continued decrease of buffalo on the prairies was creating considerable resentment among the Indians whose livelihood depended completely on the buffalo. Though poison bait was unheard of among the northern tribes, a supply was being used and made available by these southern traders. Indian dogs had been killed by the baits set out for wolves and coyotes, and it was a common belief that horses had been poisoned by eating grass where an unrecovered carcass had decomposed. If horses could die, they argued, then buffalo would also be killed.

Isolated among the northern tribes, I had not given these matters much thought. My personal loss by one of these rogues filled me with a resentment almost beyond my control. At the moment I did not credit my brother's weakness for drink a factor of any importance. I had fervently expressed my hearty approval at Carlton and Fort Pitt and definitely stated that it would be easy to recruit help to route those whisky traders and crooks who were engaged in that nefarious business.

When we got back home, Charlotte received my bad news with her usual fortitude. "Well, Peter! Using your own words, it is tough luck. We are both healthy and we can still hunt and fish. We will leave our two boys with my mother and make that trip to Beaver Lake that you claim is swarming with mink."

"Look here, woman! It will be impossible for you to go along. We will have to go on saddle horse and bring our stuff on pack horses. How can you take the girl along? Three children will be too much for your mother and I will not allow it."

"Forget your objections," she replied, "I have made up my mind. If there are as many mink on that creek as you claim, you will have no time to trap, skin and prepare the pelts as well as cook your meals, and besides we both have to work to recover our losses this winter."

The weather was very mild for that time of year in the latter part of October 1870, after a sharp period that froze the small lakes. I made a last effort to change my wife's idea of braving the trip but it was useless. "We can be at that creek in four days. We have a good tent and the weather is mild. Look at this fur-lined bag that I have made for our girl. Hundreds of Indian children have been carried for centuries in this kind of thing. My mother helped me make it. Besides, she is only too eager to have our boys in her care while we are away."

I gave up the argument but I slammed the door good and