

hardships endured by our people. Some have bewailed the poverty and suffering that has come to Indians because of the destruction of the buffalo as the chief source of our living, the loss of the ancient glory of our forefathers; and with all that I agree, in the silence of my teepee and on the broad prairies where once our fathers could not pass for the great number of those animals that blocked their way; and even in our day, we have had to choose carefully our campground for fear of being trampled in our teepees. With all these things, I think and feel intensely the sorrow my brothers express.

"I speak directly to Poundmaker and The Badger and those others who object to signing this treaty. Have you anything better to offer our people? I ask, again, can you suggest anything that will bring these things back for tomorrow and all the tomorrows that face our people?

"I for one think that the Great White Queen Mother has offered us a way of life when the buffalo are no more. Gone they will be before many snows have come to cover our heads or graves if such should be."

There were loud groans and exclamations of despair at the latter statement from many places among the group. Mista-wasis continued after waiting for the murmur to die down.

"I speak the tongue of the Blackfoot. I have been in their lodges. I have seen with my eyes and listened with my ears to the sorrows of that once-proud nation; people whom we have known as our enemies, the Peigan and the Bloods who are their brothers. Pay attention, listen hard to what I am about to say. The Big Knives of the south came into Blackfoot territory as traders; though few in number they have conquered these nations, and that, all the Crees in the days of our fathers and their fathers before them failed to do. How did they do it? Listen closely, my brothers, and you will understand. What was done to them can be done to us if we throw away the hand that is extended to us by this treaty.

"These traders, who were not of our land, with smooth talk and cheap goods persuaded the southern tribes it would be a good thing to have a place to trade products of the hunt, the hides and tanned goods. The traders came and built strong forts, and with their long rifles that can kill at twice the distance of our own and the short guns that can spout death six times quicker than you can tell about it, they had the people at their mercy. The Blackfoot soon found out the traders had nothing but whisky to exchange for their skins. Oh, yes! They were generous at first with their rotten whisky, but not for long. The traders demanded pay and got Blackfoot horses, buffalo robes, and all other things they had to offer.