

Caledonia news May 1, 1809

Dear Friend,

I received your Letter from Last Year on October 1 and I was gratified to learn that your good health has continued; that it will continue is the wish that I make to you with all my Heart! I congratulate you, Dear Friend, on the approval which you have had in Montreal and you do well to benefit from it as much as it is in your capacity. For me, it may be a long time without my being able to have the same approval, my Interests forcing me to remain in the North for a long time. Since I have regretted having come here, and in spite of the little hope that there is for young people coming to this Country, I am resolved to continue until the end the career which I had the misfortune to undertake, unless it damages my health, in which case I will voluntarily sacrifice my Interests to preserve my health, without which it is impossible to be happy.

There are places in the North which, in spite of the disagreeableness attached to the Country in general, it is however, possible to spend time sometimes agreeably; but in this case, there is nothing but misery and trouble. Cut off from all the world, we do not only not have the pleasure to know the news of other places, we live entirely on sun dried salmon made by the Savages, which is also their only dependence to live on, and as for animals, there are none, and we often live without shoes, if we don't procure the leather from the Peace River, and, to cap it all off, we will not be making a good return or profit because there are very few beavers. The Savages, accustomed to living on salmon, are too lazy to work like those of any other place. Thus you can judge without saying more if my situation is agreeable, but I would not look at the misery of tiredness, nor even the bad food, if the salmon with the bad quality of having a very BAD taste, did not also have what it takes to wreck health, because the most Robust Men who have been in this Country 3 Years are already barely able to do their duty, and although I am of an ebullient temperament I already notice that my health is declining.

This is enough on this subject -- I must teach you that I was a Discoverer this summer with Simon Fraser, and John Stuart, whom you met, I Believe. We were accompanied by 12 men in three canoes, descending this River which up to now was thought to be the Columbia. But very quickly finding the river un-navigable, we left our canoes and continued our route on foot, in the most dreadful mountains, that we would have never have been able to pass if the Natives who received us well, had not helped us. After having passed through all these bad places, not without a lot of misery as you

could imagine, we found the river again to be navigable, and we all embarked in the wooden boats and continued our route with more satisfaction, until the river discharged into the Pacific Ocean.

When we arrived, as we were going ahead of the local Savages, who are very numerous, they reflected opposition to our passing, and it took the greatest godsend of the world to get us out of this bad action, without being obliged to kill or to us all being killed. We were well received by all the other savages while going back, and arriving all in perfect health in our New Caledonia. The discharge of this river is at Latitude 49 (degrees) nearly three degrees north of the veritable Columbia.

This voyage did not change the direction of the Company, and will be of no advantage to them, this river not being navigable, but we have carried out the goal for which we undertook the voyage, so in this way we do not have any Reproach to make on ourselves.

I am out of Paper, thus I Conclude, and am your sincere friend.
J. Quesnel