

we have four hundred and fifty-three lodges, embracing nearly three thousand Indians as a nucleus, to which we may reasonably hope to attract others, in proportion as the Government is willing to minister to their more pressing needs.

With these Indians we mingled freely for more than two weeks; observed their condition,⁴⁵⁸/ their character, and their wants. It is necessary to consider these before they can be properly dealt with and provided for. They are very poor, indifferently mounted, and armed for the most part with bows and arrows. There are some old-pattern muzzle-loading guns and pistols, but probably not more than ten or a dozen improved breech-loading arms among them, while the latter are almost useless because of the impossibility of their procuring ammunition to suit them. The mass of these Indians are entirely ignorant of the routine of an agency, suspicious of the proffered kindness of the Government, and accept whatever is given them in much the same spirit with which the hog munches the acorns, without a thought of him who thrashes them down. They have a very faint idea of the advantages of civilization, and our talk with them upon that subject fell upon unwilling ears. In short, they are a very fair type of the American Indian uninfluenced by contact with the white race, and afford an excellent subject for a missionary work. Their utmost intellectual effort is to devise forms of entreaty which will induce the whites to give them whatever they want, and their ideas of the respective purposes for which the two races were created seem to be that the whites were made to give whatever the Indians want and ask for.

Our council was held at Fort Peck, beginning on the 21st day of August. There were present in the council, beside the commissioners and the white men employed at the post, about two hundred chiefs and warriors. The council occupied two days, and a report of its proceedings accompanies this report. It was only partially successful; that is to say, they seemed entirely willing to receive everything we had to give them, although they hesitated for some time about taking