Dear Mr. Lothair,

It was a pleasure as always to get your long letter with news about your cooking and the parks I had such a nice letter too, from Mr. Christie, about the Northern Islands. The reason I wrote, I had always felt some anxiety as to what had become of them. Mr. Harkau considered them as "Classified" and they were never kept among our own files. When he retired he took them to his own home and Miss Barker found them there after his death. She suggested that I should keep them but I felt they should be placed somewhere...
among other historical documents, as they might have something of value if the sovereignty was ever questioned. But I had never heard what had become of them and did not know if they might have some value. Just now, I ventured to write Mr. Christie.

I struck part of Mr. Harkin concern was that he felt Stephenson to be unreliable and he was in very bad odour with the government. I don't know just what the papers were but I do know that J. B. went time and time again to the Secretary of State, pressing action when they at last agreed to do so. Capt. Bernier came to our office and Mr. Harkin...
Do you know he had a viral infection of the stomach after an exposure to rainwater. He was always in poor health and interested in preserving life. He old his faith in nature and carried on his work.

I made our trip plan and he paid for supplies for the first expedition.
Some must be cheap chemical substance which could be combined with clay, sand dust which would make a hard surface. They did get some promising results but about that time other work grew too heavy.

I'm so sorry to hear about the northern buffalo herd. It promised so well. You spoke of the Wainwright park. It had, of course, grown too small, but they were keeping the herd down by selling it for meat. The meat is delicious, better flavour than beef if young, but it was hard to popularize. I was told that the real reason for closing the park was that speculators thought there was oil there. I don't know. It was after I left.

One thing you may not have come across was Mr. Harten's interest in developing...
indian handicrafts. Sometimes, he had a survey made of all the provinces to see what material was available. They did find china clay out west, and a wonderful pink granite deposit in New Brunswick. He also got the rail-ways interested in designs for their textiles and china using Indian motifs. Mr. Beadone designed some for china — not very good — but the men and women prison-ers in Reagdon pen made some fine hooked rugs, and a very beautiful pink granite bowl.

He had formed a strong committee with members of the group of seven, Dr. Boulton, Harold Smith, etc. But just then Mr. Bennett came out and our friends in the Pen- tenancies was removed, Gibson came to power and the whole thing fell through.
You are writing about him so how the credit for starting the whole world in developing forest travel as a source of income, and really, forming the philosophy of National Parks. The idea of "wilderness areas" was Whalleys. I have been spending the summer at Lake Erie. Next will be going up to town very soon. My future is a bit uncertain, my faithful housekeeper, who had been with the family for 30 years, has developed cancer and the case is terminal. I am not sure what my future will be, but hope a friend may go with me to Florida. It has been a shock in every way but I am hoping there will be a happy solution.

My kindest regards to all, Mr. Cohee and yourself. And I shall look forward to your next installment.
MB Williams, Port Stanley, to WF Lothian, 7 September [1970]

Dear Mr. Lothian,

It was a pleasure, as always, to get your long newsy letter with news about your writing and the parks situation. I had such a nice letter, too, from M. Chretien, about the Northern Islands.

The reason I wrote, I always felt some anxiety as to what had become of them. Mr. Harkin considered them as “classified” and they never were kept among our own files. When he retired he took them to his own home and Miss Barber found them after his death. She suggested that I should keep them but I felt they should be placed somewhere

among other historical documents as they might have some value if the sovereignty was ever questioned. But I had never heard what had become of them and did not know if they might have some value just now. I ventured to write M. Chretien.

I think part of Mr. Harkins was that he felt Stefannsson to be unreliable he was in very bad odour with the government. I don’t know just what the papers were but I do know that J.B. went time and time to the Secretary of State, pressuring action. When they at last agreed to do so, Capt. Bernier came to our office, and Mr. Harkin

and he made out the plan and the list of supplies for the first expedition.

You see, it had nothing really to do with our own work, except that J.B. was very much interested in preserving the wild life as a food for the Eskimo.

He was always thinking of the whole of Canada. For example the Reindeer experiment and the discovery of the great Tar Sands – now so important. Did you know he had a road in Jasper park paved with the stuff. Then he & FHHW [Williamson] spent many nights trying to find a cheap substitute for road making. He felt

there must be some cheap chemical substance which could be combined with, say, sawdust which would make a hard surface. They did get some promising results but about that time the other work grew too heavy.

I’m so sorry to hear about the northern buffalo herd. It promised so well. You spoke of the Wainwright park. It had, of course, grown too small, but they were keeping the herd down by selling it for meat. The meat is delicious, better flavour than beef – if young – but it was hard to popularize. I was told that the real reason for closing the park – that speculators thought there was oil there. I don’t know. It was after I left.

One thing you may not have come across was JB Harkin’s interest in developing

Canadian handicrafts, souvenirs, etc. He had a survey made of all the provinces to see what material was available. They did find china clay out west, and a wonderful pink quartz deposit in New Brunswick. He also got the railways interested in designs for their textiles and china using Indian motifs. Mr. Beddoe designed some for china – not very good - & the men & women prisoners in Kingston pen made some fine hooked rugs, and a very beautiful pink quartz bowl. He had formed a
strong committee with members of the Group of Seven, Dr. Barbeau, Harlan Smith, etc. but just then Mr. Bennett came in and our friend in the penitentiaries was removed, Gibson came to power and the whole thing fell through.

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[ ] you are writing about him [ ] the credit for starting the whole world in developing tourist travel as a source of income, and really, forming the philosophy of National Parks. The idea of “Wilderness Areas” was wholly his.

I have been spending the summer at Lake Erie but will be going up to town very soon. My future is a bit uncertain, my faithful housekeeper, who had been with the family for 30 years, has developed cancer and the case is terminal. I’m not sure what my future will be, but hope a friend may go with me to Florida. It has been a shock in every way but I am hoping there will be a happy solution.

My kindest regards to both [Mrs.?] Lothian & yourself, and I shall look forward to your next instalment.

M.B.W.