Northern Plains Treaties

Is a Treaty Intended to Be Forever?

"I heard that long ago there was a time when there were no people in this country except Indians. After that the people began to hear of men that had white skins; they had been seen far to the east. Before I was born they came out to our country and visited us. The man who came was from the government. He wanted to make a treaty with us, and to give us presents, blankets and guns, flint and steel, and knives. The Head Chief told him that we needed none of these things. He said, "We have our buffalo and corn. These things the Ruler gave to us, and they are all we need…We do not want your presents, and we do not want you to come into our country."

Curly Chief, "Keep Your Presents" in *Native American Testimony,* ed. Peter Nabokov (New York: Penguin Books, 1999)

Curly Chief (Pawnee) describes his leader rejecting European goods, valuing their tribal land and resources over what was being offered.