

"Four Days... Two Bodies"¹

The story of the counter-movement organized by John C. Schultz and his sympathizers in the days after his escape from Fort Garry must be told if we are to understand the conflicts and cross-purposes of the Insurrection. Without it no study of the Insurrection or, indeed, of the Archibald administration makes any sense.

Schultz made his escape on January 23² and was able to reach the McBeth home. There he was hidden until he could be taken down to the Lower Settlement, where his henchman Monkman's home was. His whereabouts in the succeeding days can only be guessed at, but the evidence available suggests that Riel was not wrong when he wrote that Schultz "labored to destroy" the Provisional Government. It is time now to consider that evidence.³

The diarist and historian Alexander Begg thought he could see proof of the existence of a preconcerted plan in the fact that although the "party from the Portage only passed through the town on the morning of the 15th... that same night over six hundred men collected together at Kildonan school-house, from all parts."

Agents must have been at work for some time, and foremost amongst these were Dr. Schultz and Mr. Charles Mair. The former was either refused a command, or he would not accept one in the expedition, as he was only known as a private soldier in it. He, however, made himself very conspicuous in driving about, exciting the people, and taking an active part in the several councils of war that took place, - at one of which it was proposed to burn down the town.⁴

On February 19, just after the dispersal of the force at Kildonan, a correspondent of the Montreal Witness prepared a dispatch for his newspaper in which he told what he had seen and heard of the movement in the Lower Settlement:

Last Sabbath [13th] two men from the Portage came down here telling the people that they had 200 men ready: that Dease had possession of the Stinking River barricade: that Nolan was at Oak

Point: Lavinie at White Horse Plains, all keeping back the French from joining Riel (the three above named are loyal French) while they, with the help of the Indian Settlement and St. Andrews, would take the Fort, liberate the prisoners, and establish a government with Mr. Donald Smith at the head.⁵

The grand strategy of this movement is to be noted, as is the three-point objective, with its purpose of establishing a government to be headed by a man who was at once a Hudson's Bay Company official and a Canadian commissioner. In the days following the failure of the movement mention of this purpose was to be suppressed, and the liberation of the prisoners emphasized.

The response to this call to action was prompt enough to be conspicuous immediately, and on Monday, February 14, Begg recorded in his journal that "a rumor was abroad that Schultz was raising a body of men near the Stone Fort".⁶ Begg also recorded the continued presence of the Portage la Prairie men at Headingly, where a severe blizzard had forced them to stop. It is appropriate to pause here and look at what is known of this part of the grand strategy.

One of the sources upon which the Schultz counter-movement depended for strength was Portage la Prairie. William Gaddy had instigated a secret organization of eight men, whose object was the release of William Hallett, an intimate friend and hunting companion of Gaddy, and his fellow prisoners.⁷ Gaddy's organization, according to "R. McC" in the St. Paul Daily Pioneer, included Thomas Scott, who had told stories of the sufferings endured by those in confinement in the Fort,⁸ William Farmer, Charles Mair, J.J. Setter,⁹ and three others, possibly including H.L. Sabine and Murdoch McLeod. Major Boulton, who led the force once it was organized, insisted that he was not in the secret organization, but was called upon because of his military experience, and led the men only reluctantly, feeling it his "duty", as he wrote in his Reminiscences, "to accompany them, and endeavor to keep them to the legitimate object for

which they organized."¹⁰ In spite of efforts to keep the organization's intentions secret, its preparations were known at Winnipeg as early as February 10, the same day that the fireworks were set off in that village to celebrate the Provisional Government.¹¹ Begg recorded that Mr. Lonsdale, delegate from Headingly, "sent word to stop them till the Convention had finished its labours".¹² Sixty strong, the force left Portage la Prairie equipped with ladders, battering rams and torches for the nocturnal enterprise.¹³ Sources do not agree on the date.

Boulton and his men, once involved in statecraft, soon found themselves faced with the same type of practical problems that Riel and his committee of Métis had met. On the way to Headingly they had to take two prisoners, and Boulton took the precaution to have them detained until the tiny army was well on its way, "that no information might reach Fort Garry in advance of our movement." Like Riel, Boulton received criticism from his men for his way of dealing with the prisoners. Some felt that the prisoners should have been kept with the force, but Boulton "did not wish anything done that would arouse a feeling prejudicial to [the] movement."¹⁴ They were joined by volunteers at High Bluff¹⁵ and reached Headingly about midnight.¹⁶

At Headingly they sought shelter in settlers' homes, having agreed to make the attack on Fort Garry at dawn.¹⁷ The elements, however, were not on their side. A blizzard came up, and they could not leave Headingly for two days. On the morning following their arrival there they held a meeting at Mr. Taylor's house. Boulton felt that he had lost the confidence of the men, and he resigned his command, stating his reasons and proposing that they should choose someone else to command them. However, he was renominated and, after stating that he would do his "utmost to accomplish the object for which [they] had left the Portage", he was

reelected.¹⁸ William Gaddy and H.L. Sabine left from Headingly to meet with William Dease in the southern parishes.¹⁹

At Headingly, "visits" were paid to several settlers who were known to be in sympathy with the Provisional Government, and weapons were requisitioned. John Taylor was "persuaded" to join the party.²⁰

The enforced stay at Headingly had deprived the party of any element of surprise it had ever had, and a letter was received from Riel warning them that if they did not return home at once he would send a force and make them prisoners.²¹ While at Headingly, too, they met Kenneth McKenzie, on his way home from attending the Council of Forty, who tried to discourage them from going on to Fort Garry. The prisoners were being released, he told them, or were about to be so.²² Had the party paid attention to McKenzie's entreaties Red River history might well have been very different. There can be no doubt that these men – like Schultz – now knew that they were acting against the wishes of a majority of the Red River community. They knew, too, that those in Fort Garry knew of their movements. However, as Boulton put it, "the men's blood was up"²³, and those favoring further moves clearly had ascendancy in the party. It is clear that from this point on the real reason for acting was the overthrow of the Provisional Government, however emphatically they might protest later that it was the release of the prisoners.

J.J. Setter and Murdoch McLeod had been sent to the English parishes with the message that the Portage men intended to continue as planned.²⁴ The Portage party now decided to continue to move towards Kildonan by way of Fort Garry.

It will be useful at this point – before the move to Kildonan – to examine the state of the prisoners who were the ostensible reason for the counter-movement. In 1869 and 1870 there had

been no international convention on the treatment of prisoners-of-war. Some general statements had been made by Montesquieu and J.J. Rousseau, of course, and Riel may well have come upon them in his studies at Montreal.²⁵ Both held that the right of the captor over the prisoner was limited to preventing him from taking up arms again, and ceased altogether with the end of hostilities. It could be argued that the Provisional Government had no right at all to retain the prisoners, but the intransigent attitude of the "Canadian" party made it inadvisable for Riel and Lépine to give the men their freedom again until they had given their word not to take up arms against them. These soldiers of Col. Dennis's simply could not be allowed to roam about the Settlement and attempt to overthrow the Provisional Government. Every effort must be made to keep the peace while a general consensus was arrived at. On February 15 this had just been accomplished.²⁶

No prisoner-of-war convention could have complained about the buildings used to confine the "Canadian" party, especially not its leader. Dr. O'Donnell, one of those confined, gave interesting details on this point:

Dr. Schultz, Mrs. Schultz and Mrs. Mair were allowed to accept an invitation to lodge in the house of Mr. J.H. McTavish in the Hudson Bay post, and Dr. O'Donnell and his wife were allowed to accept rooms with Dr. Wm Cowan's family, the chief factor in charge of Fort Garry. Two days after Dr. O'Donnell was taken from Dr. Cowan's house and lodged with the other prisoners, but Dr. Schultz was allowed to remain with his wife with Mr. McTavish's family until two days prior to his escape, when he was placed in the building where the other prisoners were, but in a room by himself.²⁷

The lot of the other men was somewhat different. At first the men were put in "overcrowded"²⁸ rooms that had once been officers' quarters in the Fort.²⁹ Then for a time they were lodged in "the jail outside the fort walls, on the banks of the Assiniboine River".³⁰ On January 12, just after the escape of twelve prisoners, the men were taken back to the same rooms

they had occupied at first.³¹ This is where they were at the time of the counter-movement. They had to sleep in their blankets on the floor, using their coats for pillows.³² During the day they used their bed-rolls for seats.³³

The basic fare was coarse meat, pemmican and bannock, washed down with black tea.³⁴ The prisoners had to prepare this food themselves. However, people were often permitted to send regular meals to them, and occasionally treats of apples, pie or tarts were sent in.³⁵ A special Christmas dinner was provided by friends in Winnipeg.³⁶ Bread was provided from time to time.³⁷

Clergymen were permitted to visit the men. The Rev. George Young came regularly for prayer services.³⁸ Archdeacon McLean came occasionally³⁹, as did Rev. Mr. Fletcher of Portage la Prairie.⁴⁰

The guards appear to have had a certain amount of freedom in the way they dealt with the men. This occasionally led to unfortunate results. At the time of John C. Schultz's escape he left word with the guards to treat all the prisoners with rum at his expense. The guards passed it in pails through all the rooms. A.W. Graham, one of the prisoners, was of the opinion that this rum was partly responsible for an unpleasant scene which took place when Riel came in to examine all the windows.⁴¹

Prisoners were occasionally released temporarily for special reasons. Ashdown, the tinsmith, was allowed out on January 6 to fix up some stoves in the New Nation printing office. He was accompanied by a guard, and had to return to prison when his work was finished.⁴² On at least one occasion – there may have been others, since a petition was presented asking for his release – Dr. O'Donnell was allowed to leave prison in company with a guard to care for the children of Mr. Burdick.⁴³ On still another occasion – on which there are tantalizingly few

details – O'Donnell was allowed out to act as interpreter in an interview involving the American Consul Oscar Malmros and some "French Half Breeds" with a view to preventing a "rising" intended to free the prisoners.⁴⁴

While their quarters were very cramped, the prisoners sometimes had the use of the hall between the rooms. On Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day there was music and dancing.⁴⁵ At twelve o'clock New-Year's Eve, A.W. Graham recorded, they "hailed the New Year with 'God Save The Queen'" and followed with "two hours' music and dancing in the Hall."⁴⁶

The prisoners looked upon themselves as a duly enlisted company, "No. 1 Company of Winnipeg Volunteers", according to prisoner Graham. Dr. James Lynch was their captain, Mr. George Müller their major and Mr. W.J. Allen their lieutenant.⁴⁷ George D. McVicar agreed with Graham on this point.⁴⁸

It was very inconvenient for the Provisional Government to have a body of prisoners to look after in Fort Garry, and the prisoners were repeatedly offered their freedom if they would take an oath not to act against the Provisional Government. On New-Year's day Riel offered some prisoners their liberty if they would swear allegiance to this government. Prisoner Graham recorded in his diary, "They refused, of course."⁴⁹ On January 6 Mr. Bannatyne arranged with Riel for the release of Mr. Mulkins and Mr. Hamilton, and those gentlemen promptly started for Canada with Mr. Snow.⁵⁰ From time to time rumors circulated that the prisoners were to be allowed out, but most of these rumors did not culminate in actual releases. From the evidence available it would appear that the Provisional Government was contending with what would today be called "militants".

Shortly after the Convention finished its labors on February 10, Riel, true to his promise, released Governor Mactavish, Dr. Cowan and Mr. Bannatyne.⁵¹ Setting the other prisoners free

was more easily said than done. On the 12th William Hallett was released, giving security of 450 pounds to keep the peace.⁵² William Drever, Jr., was let out on security of 400 pounds.⁵³

According to Graham, "the rest of us were offered our liberty by taking an oath of allegiance to Riel's government. Ten or eleven went out on these terms. **THE REST OF US REFUSED** [emphasis mine]".⁵⁴ Begg's account of the same event is as follows: "The following prisoners were released on their parol[e] that they should keep the peace and abide by the laws of the country."⁵⁵ A. W. Graham described what he remembered of his turn in front of O'Donoghue:

O'Donoghue read me the oath. I said I was a British subject on British soil and would take no oath to serve another government. Riel said, "Take that man out." I was taken back.⁵⁶

The position Graham here took is interesting and worthy of comment. On Christmas Eve the prisoners had learned that McDougall's proclamation was "spurious", making their acts "illegal".⁵⁷ The day after Christmas Graham wrote that the prisoners "were all down in the mouth since we hear [the] proclamation is spurious".⁵⁸ Having "enlisted" and gone "on duty guarding the stores and provisions at Dr. Schultz's" they now had to retreat to the "British subject" position, while knowing full well that there was no other government in the North-West.⁵⁹ Many months later Graham would state his position this way in a letter to the Telegraph: "I tried to mind, and I believe I did mind, my own business, and interfered with that of no one else. But I had to take up arms in defence of my own life when the British flag, being hauled down could afford no protection."⁶⁰

Graham and the others had given themselves permission to remain in prison for three more days. On the 13th, John F. Grant went to the Fort from Headingly to demand the release of the prisoners. Riel answered that they could go on giving their parole, but that through some misunderstanding they were refusing to give it.⁶¹ On the 14th James Ross and two others called

and advised them to take the oath and be let out, but they refused.⁶² According to Graham's diary for that same day Riel knew of the imminent departure of the Portage men from Headingly: "About midnight Riel came to our door and told us that our friends were going to attack the Fort, to release us, and the first movement would be our death." On the 14th, also, Begg reported in his journal the capture at William Dease's of six men, among them William Gaddy and H.L. Sabine, Dease himself having eluded capture.⁶³ Begg did not know the significance of this, and made no comment on it. Gaddy, of course, had gone to Dease's as part of the grand strategy of the counter-movement, and his capture was a considerable victory for the Provisional Government.

In the hours before the Portage men passed through Winnipeg on their way to Kildonan the situation with regard to the prisoners was this: William Hallett, the subject of Gaddy's concern, was no longer there, having been released on bail three days earlier, while Sabine and Gaddy, the founder of the secret organization of eight, were prisoners. Dr. Lynch was in irons⁶⁴, reportedly, according to Begg, for striking one of his guards. A considerable number of the "Canadian" party had been released, and the 24 who were still there were prisoners because of their own intransigence.⁶⁵

About 4 o'clock on the morning of the 15th the Portage party passed through Winnipeg on their way to join Schultz. As they passed the Fort the sentries saw them and fired a signal of alarm⁶⁶, but no effort was made to interfere with them. In the village they searched several houses, including that of H. Coutu, where Riel occasionally slept.⁶⁷ Major Boulton and Thomas Scott entered Coutu's house, "hoping to make a timely capture", but Coutu assured them that Riel was not there. They had breakfast at William Inkster's, and passed on to Kildonan.⁶⁸ Here they occupied the church "as previously arranged"⁶⁹, hoisted the Union Jack⁷⁰ and waited for the

arrival of the force from the Lower Settlement. During the day J.J. Setter arrived from there⁷¹, saying that five hundred loyalists and Indians were on the way, headed by Schultz and bringing a cannon and ammunition with them.

The practical problems that had worried Major Boulton when he was elected commander of the Portage party now began to arise. The men could keep warm in the Kildonan church, but if they were to be there long something would have to be done about feeding them.⁷² The New Nation reported that "men went around and demanded at the point of the bayonet, a certain quantity of provisions."⁷³ Boulton later wrote that they "had to fall back upon the hospitality of the people in the immediate neighborhood for our evening and morning meals." There is probably some truth in both accounts. Certainly Boulton and his men were not aided in this by the fact that their arrival there created consternation among the local people.⁷⁴ It was common knowledge that there was now a Provisional Government. People were disposed to be quiet and see what happened.

These considerations prompted the decision to send a local man, Tom Norquay, to ask Riel to release the remaining prisoners.⁷⁵ Riel acceded at once, and was in the act of administering an oath to a prisoner when Miss Victoria McVicar arrived with A.G.B. Bannatyne.⁷⁶ Miss McVicar, then visiting at the Point Douglas Sutherlands, had heard rumors of a gathering in the Lower Settlement. She had independently taken the initiative of asking Bannatyne to help her in an attempt to persuade Riel to release the prisoners. She soon discovered that it was the prisoners, and not Riel, who needed persuading. Alexander Begg described the scene as Bannatyne and McVicar spoke to the prisoners urging them to sign the oath "to keep the peace and the laws of the country.":

[Robert R.] Smith was the first prisoner who was called and when he was asked to sign he asked if the rest would sign. Mr.

Bannatyne requested him to sign and told him it was all right. Smith signed. Miller followed – the same thing happened, the next prisoner was similar; then all the balance followed. Dr. Lynch said at once when he saw the paper that he could sign that and immediately did so. Riel would not take Farquharson's oath as he said he had twice already broken his oath – they pushed him out of the Fort.

According to Begg William Drever then drove Miss McVicar down to give the news to those at Kildonan church and prevent any hostile move on the Fort.⁷⁷ At this point Maurice Lowman, James Ross and Colin Inkster came to the Fort to ask for a general amnesty to all Canadians.⁷⁸ They were not successful, probably because there were still armed men at Kildonan and the situation was not back to normal.

This would have been an excellent time for the men assembled at the Kildonan church to go home. The prisoners had been released⁷⁹; no blood had been shed. There was no reason at this point for the Provisional Government to be angry with either the Portage party or the Schultz force from the Lower Settlement, since Riel, Lépine and O'Donoghue could well understand the annoyance that people felt about prisoners being kept in Fort Garry.

This was soon to change.

During the absence of Norquay and the private initiative of Miss McVicar the situation at Kildonan had altered dramatically. About three o'clock in the afternoon the force from the Lower Settlement arrived. Boulton described the scene:

It was a fine sight...to see three or four hundred settlers marching up to our neighborhood, headed by a small cannon, drawn by four oxen, the whole under the leadership of Dr. Schultz, whose powerful figure stood out boldly as he led them up.⁸⁰

Boulton went on to describe how "the utmost enthusiasm now prevailed, though there were many who felt great anxiety under the new turn of affairs, fearing that a conflict was inevitable, which so far had been happily averted". Boulton shared this anxiety, but he was enough of a

soldier that his first concern as he surveyed the changing scene was "how to feed the large gathering."

A subscription list was passed around to raise sufficient to purchase some supplies; but beyond a sovereign from Dr. Schultz, who emptied his pockets, and half a sovereign from one or two others, there was no money among the party. The Rev. Mr. Black placed his house, stores, and everything that he had at our disposal; and we camped in the church for the night.⁸¹

Other administrative details had to be dealt with too. Strangers had been noticed in the district, and three of these were arrested and detained on suspicion of being spies. One was John McKenney, the son of Sheriff McKenney, one was a man named Porter, and the third was a Métis named Parisien, who had been following J.J. Setter.⁸² These men had to be kept in confinement somewhere until it was considered safe to release them. Details concerning McKenney and Porter have not come down to us, but Parisien was assigned to the care of George Garrioch, of the Portage, who imprisoned Parisien under the church pulpit and stood guard over him.⁸³

Here we must pause briefly and consider this situation. It is understandable, under the circumstances, that Parisien and the others should be taken prisoner. News of the release of the prisoners in Fort Garry was sent to Major Boulton late in the evening, and those in Winnipeg congratulated themselves on the satisfactory turn that events had taken.⁸⁴ Why were the prisoners at Kildonan not released when the news came? George Garrioch would certainly have been pleased to be relieved of his onerous duty of watching Parisien. The answer is probably near at hand. The decision to attack Fort Garry must already have been taken by those in charge of affairs. McKenney, Parisien and Porter could not, under these circumstances, be permitted to be at large. They were prisoners-of-war, and their captors were responsible for them in the same

way that the Provisional Government was responsible for the prisoners they had felt themselves obliged to take.

Our suspicions in this connection are strengthened when we learn what happened early the next morning. A meeting was held in the church to consider strategy. "R. McC" reported to the St. Paul Daily Pioneer that a "general council for the force" was appointed, consisting of the following: John Tait, A.H. Murray, Thomas Sinclair, Edward Hay, John Hodgson, Wm. Leask, George Calder, Andrew Mowatt, Donald Gunn, Jr., Adam McDonald, Joseph Monkman, Henry Prince, Alex Ross, Dr. Beddome and "several" others whose names were not known. It was agreed that, if force had to be actively employed, this council should choose for themselves a leader.⁸⁵ The council met shortly afterwards to draw up a set of demands to send to the Provisional Government.⁸⁶ The first demand, that all the prisoners be released, requires a bit of explanation. When news of the release of the prisoners came to the Portage party, George McVicar and "Flatboat" McLean, not content with the news, went in to Winnipeg to see for themselves. Their movements aroused the suspicions of Provisional Government patrols and McLean was caught and taken to the Fort. McVicar made good his escape, but did not return to Kildonan until the next morning, reaching the church just before the Parisien incident.⁸⁷ The second point was to the effect that, while they did not object to the French governing themselves in any way they chose, they would have nothing to do with the Provisional Government. Finally they demanded the restitution of the property of Schultz, Dease and others, and a guarantee that such confiscations would not be repeated. These demands were put into letter form by the Rev. John Black⁸⁸, and Thomas Norquay volunteered to take it to Riel.⁸⁹ Norquay was about to set out when the incident involving Parisien took place.⁹⁰

The story of Parisien's escape has often been told, but there are good reasons for telling it again, partisan historians having taken pains to suppress certain details.

It had been agreed that at a certain time the force would "move on St. Boniface, plant the cannon there and breach the walls of Fort Garry". It was argued, Charles Mair wrote, that those in the Fort would not return fire for fear of damaging St. Boniface buildings.⁹¹ Preparations for this move had been going forward while the council was meeting. Men were standing around waiting when Parisien and Garrioch came out of the church. Parisien had asked to go to the toilet.⁹² In view of the nature of the request Garrioch took him out the back door. Garrioch had no experience in this sort of thing, and before he realized what was happening Parisien had followed the path through the snow around to the front. There was a large crowd of people and several cutters were parked. Mr. Cameron's had in it a double-barreled shotgun, loaded with ball and standing in the rig so as to be visible. Parisien saw his chance, ran for the cutter and grabbed the gun. Again Charles Mair has supplied details:

Mr. Dilworth cried to Garrioch to stop him and shoot if necessary
[,] at which Parisien turned and pointed the gun at Garrioch [,] who
jumped aside into the crowd.

Parisien ran up the trail and followed it to take the "ice track" onto the river.

At that moment John Hugh Sutherland⁹³, who had been taking no part in the gathering at Kildonan, happened to be riding along the "ice track" toward the area where the crowd had gathered. He was carrying a message from his father concerning the release of the prisoners at the Fort. Spectators were not sure if Parisien simply feared pursuit or wanted Sutherland's horse.⁹⁴ At any rate Parisien fired one barrel at Sutherland, injuring him in the hand. The horse reared and threw Sutherland. When he got up Parisien fired the other barrel, wounding him

mortally in the breast. Now, having been wounded in the thigh by a shot from Dilworth's rifle, Parisien threw away the weapon and ran for the woods on the other side of the river.

A group of men of the Portage party including Robert McBain⁹⁵, Thomas Scott⁹⁶, Wildred Bartlett⁹⁷ and the Pocha⁹⁸ brothers pursued him on horseback and he was eventually overtaken in the woods. A desperate hand-to-hand scuffle ensued in which Parisien was able to wrest McBain's⁹⁹ gun from him, and he just missed McBain when he fired at him with it. He was hit on the head with a hatchet and knocked out by one of the Pocha brothers.¹⁰⁰ The details of this portion of the engagement did not all come out until the 1920's, by which time accounts by Mrs. Black (John Hugh Sutherland's sister), A.C. Garrioch, Milner Hart and Charles Mair had appeared in print.¹⁰¹

Details of what happened next did not take so long to appear in print, but there is difficulty about identifying those who took part. Several sources agree that Parisien was bound hand and foot and dragged head first toward the church until Boulton met them and prevented them from doing what they apparently had in mind – lynching Parisien.¹⁰² Boulton wrote in 1886 that Parisien's "feet were tied together with a sash, and he was being dragged along the ice by another sash which was tied around his neck."¹⁰³ Boulton realized that Parisien's case was one for "judicial trial" and he did not wish any "hasty act or feeling to prejudice their proceedings." J.J. Setter, in an account published in 1890, stated that Parisien was dragged by "Wildred Bartlett and others."¹⁰⁴ These accounts confirm what was written and published in French twelve years earlier in Le Nouveau Monde. Louis Riel prepared a long article in an attempt to refute what Dr. James S. Lynch had written about the Insurrection. Riel stated that "persons who were not at all interested in talking about it" had said that "Scott tied a sash to the

neck of Parisien – still alive – and that, after having tied the other end of the sash to the tail of a horse, mounted behind the rider of the horse and set it running a good quarter of a mile.”¹⁰⁵

It has been objected that this evidence should not be used because Riel was attempting, four years after Scott's execution, to denigrate Scott's character and justify the execution. But the purpose here is not to persuade a jury that someone or other is guilty of an act. The historian's purpose is to establish what happened in a case where an entire community was responsible for two deaths. In my view the evidence of these “persons” “not at all interested in talking about it” has the ring of truth. It is entirely believable that men, faced with the task of dragging an insensible and bleeding man back to where he could be dealt with, would use an available horse for the purpose. And it is believable that one of them would get on the horse behind the rider – the expression is “monta en croupe” – and ride rather than walk the quarter of a mile distance. It is understandable that those watching would not be at all interested in talking about it afterwards, when tempers had cooled and the nature of the acts had become clearer. It is also understandable that, given the controversy about Scott's execution which took place in Ontario in the following months, there would be an attempt to suppress Scott's part in the Portage affair.

As we have seen, Boulton interfered in what the men had planned, and Parisien was taken to the church, cared for by Dr. Beddome and taken by him to the Beddome house in St. Andrews.¹⁰⁶ Sutherland, meanwhile, had been carried into Dr. Black's kitchen, where he was examined by Dr. Beddome and John C. Schultz.¹⁰⁷ They probed for the ball, but Sutherland died the next day.¹⁰⁸ Parisien lingered on to die in early April.¹⁰⁹

The wounding of the two men had a profound effect on all concerned. The “general council for the force” already had reason for disappointment in the working out of the grand

strategy. There was no word of activity on the part of any of the "loyal" French, either at Stinking River, Oak Point or White Horse Plains.¹¹⁰ As for Kildonan, not only was there no sign of a rising among the parish men, there were now distinct signs of opposition to the entire plan. Just after Sutherland and Parisien had been carried away a man named Henderson wanted to take down the Union Jack. However, the Portage men had put it up and they were not going to have it taken down by anybody:

Dilworth said (")No - the man who hauls it down will go down with it["].¹¹¹

Women now fell upon their knees and implored the Portage party and the Schultz force to go home.¹¹²

In the meantime William Fraser had gone to Riel with news of the woundings and Norquay had left to take the council's letter to Riel. His reply to Fraser was that Parisien, as an escaping prisoner, had every right to fire on any one he thought to be a pursuer. Riel insisted that, in detaining Parisien, the Portage men had detained an ally, since he was "one of the warmest partisans of Schultz and McDougall". Norquay then arrived with the letter and told of the shootings. Riel became very "excited and angry."¹¹³

As head of the Provisional Government Riel had the best of reasons for excitement and anger. Four months of intense political activity had seen no bloodshed. Now, just as a broad basis of support had been established for the Provisional Government, two men had been wounded and might die. Also, John Hugh Sutherland was the son of John Sutherland of Point Douglas, a friend of the Riel family, a man who had worked hard, often in the face of criticism and personal abuse, to bring about reconciliation and community of purpose between the Métis and their English-speaking compatriots.¹¹⁴ That the son of this man should be the first one hurt was the most unfortunate of tragedies, one that could seriously injure the long-run interest of the

Provisional Government. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Riel tore up the letter from Black, had Norquay detained, and told Fraser to go home and tell the English what he had seen.¹¹⁵ However, one of Riel's next acts was to ask Dr. Bird to go down to Kildonan to see if anything could be done for the injured men. Every effort was then made to meet the expected attack. Scouts were sent out in all directions from Winnipeg to call for reinforcements and watch for hostile activity.¹¹⁶

With basic defensive preparations going forward steadily Riel turned to other matters. About four o'clock in the afternoon he had Norquay¹¹⁷ and "Flatboat" McLean released.¹¹⁸ He sent a letter to the "general council for the force" with Norquay, warning that the Provisional Government was ready for war but what it really wanted was peace and the British rights of all. He said that the prisoners were out, having all sworn to keep the peace. He reminded the council that Governor Mactavish had urged them to form and complete the Provisional Government and that their representatives had joined the government on that basis.¹¹⁹ "Flatboat" McLean spoke to Riel about the return journey of the Portage party and asked "if the party would be permitted to pass". Riel was silent, listening to McLean, and when McLean went on to inform him that the party intended to use the route just outside the town Riel replied, "Ah, that is good."¹²⁰

When Dr. Bird returned from Kildonan and reported he said that the council was meeting at Mr. Black's, and since the meeting was not over he did not know what would be done. Bird did not believe that Sutherland would live.¹²¹ In the evening Maurice Lowman came to Winnipeg and reported that the council had decided that the force should disperse. The Portage party would go home in the morning. Begg noted that while there was a general feeling of relief at this news a large guard was nevertheless kept on the alert during the night.¹²²

Lowman's report had been accurate. The correspondent for the Montreal Witness described what was going on at Kildonan at the same time that the Provisional Government was making its preparations to protect Winnipeg, St. Boniface and the Fort:

The messenger [Norquay] was sent, but no movement was made forward. In about two hours we heard that he was kept a prisoner. Many were then for marching at once, but no order was given. Meanwhile, many were going home, having nothing to eat, and being wearied, waiting so long and nothing done. At last, about dark... the Indian chief ordered his men home, and all the rest quickly dispersed, and would have left the cannon there for the French to get, if half a dozen good fellows had not stuck to it and got it off safely.

The correspondent gave what he considered to be the reasons for the failure of the counter-movement:

...hesitation ruined the movement. And another cause was Schultz being there, which incensed the French, dissatisfied many of our party, and added no strength to it. There was also no management in the affair, no provisions furnished, no leader to guide the men, and no order in the camp – just a mob of men gathered together, full of spirit but without a plan to work by.¹²³

Here it will be useful to turn aside for a moment and give careful consideration to the body of fourteen and more men who were chosen from those assembled to be a "general council for the force". We shall be breaking new ground here, for historians have for the most part neglected it, and little in the way of documents exists to enable us to know these men and their purposes better. Nevertheless it is possible to learn something about them, using the available evidence in a manner reminiscent of the way we use pencil and paper to coax the inscription from a badly worn coin. We have the names of fourteen of them from the St. Paul Daily Pioneer.¹²⁴ It would seem that to this list we should add those who, according to Charles Mair, "remained at Kildonan consulting what was best to do: C. Mair, F. Ogletree, Sandy Cameron, Jno. Setter, and Wm. B. Hall."¹²⁵ To this should also be added the names of George Garrioch

and Martin Burnell, mentioned by A.C. Garrioch in First Furrows as being with the five listed by Mair.¹²⁶

In May of 1870, less than three months after the events here described, Charles Mair, angry with John C. Schultz for taking so much of the limelight in the negotiations leading to the passing of the Manitoba Act, wrote to him:

I felt annoyed in Ottawa at your recognition of the Manitoba Bill without concurrence, as it place[sic] me in a position of antagonism to you and Lynch. There were other points moreover which you should have remembered, or at least consulted upon with Mr. Setter and myself. I refer to Portage la Prairie. Any documentary reference to that settlement should of course have come from either Mr. Setter or myself who in conjunction with Farmer and Scott **DEvised THE MOVEMENT AT THE PORTAGE** [emphasis mine]...¹²⁷

Mair went on:

I do not recognize Dr. Lynch's right, or the right of any man in Canada saving Dr. Setter and Farmer to represent Portage la Prairie under existing circumstances, inasmuch as we are the parties, and the sole parties **NOW LIVING** [emphasis mine] who instituted the movement there...

Mair hoped that Schultz would see the "justice of these remarks and repair as far as possible in future the injustice which has been done. If as I apprehend the mischief is complete", Mair went on,

I shall certainly be compelled to deal in self-defence with the history of the transactions since Denis's[sic] call upon the Canadians after a different fashion from what I intended. Portage la Prairie **WE** [emphasis his] represent. Red River settlement is represented by you and Dr. Lynch.¹²⁸

A number of the members from the Lower Settlement were from St. Andrews, with three from St. Peters, three from St. James, and one each from Kildonan and St. Clements. Nine or ten were of mixed blood, three were of European origin, while Henry Prince represented the Indians

of St. Peters.¹²⁹ It must be assumed that they had in common a sympathy with, perhaps an admiration for, John C. Schultz, who had solicited their help.¹³⁰ The homes of three of them – John Tait, A.H. Murray and Andrew Mowatt – are among those suggested by Alexander Begg's diary as places where Schultz could have taken refuge.¹³¹ When the party sent in search of Schultz reached John Tait's, according to Begg, they found not Schultz but Mrs. Schultz!¹³² Henry Prince was a friend of Schultz¹³³, and Monkman was deeply indebted to him.¹³⁴ The Gunn family were close friends of Schultz and shared with him a certain amount of hostility to the Hudson's Bay Company.

No fewer than three of the "general council for the force" had been present at the October, 1869, meeting which prepared an address of welcome to Lieutenant-Governor-designate McDougall. These were E.H.G.G. Hay, Thomas Sinclair and John Tait.¹³⁵ Looking farther into the Red River past may be risky, but we must at least notice that since William Hallett¹³⁶ was until February 12 a prisoner in the Fort and John C. Schultz the escaped prisoner able to ask for help, certain affinities dating back to the jail-breakings of January 18, 1868¹³⁷, cannot be ruled out as we attempt to understand this group of men.

Having established something of their identity and background, what do we know of their doings at Kildonan? And why was it that the parish in which the great assembly took place did not contribute scores of its men to these who had come from the Lower Settlement and the western parishes?¹³⁸

No member of this council seems to have seen fit to make any kind of list of the men who had volunteered, so the size of the force is not known. The diligent reader may take his choice from among several numbers. Bishop Taché was given figures of from 500 to 800 by clergymen who were at Kildonan and persuaded the council to have the men disperse.¹³⁹ The American

Consul, Oscar Malmros, most likely as impartial an observer as any, wrote on the 16th to his superior in Washington that "200 Swampy Indians abundantly supplied with whiskey by the notorious Dr. Schultz, about 160 [E]nglish halfbreeds and 80 men from the Canadian settlement and vicinity near Portage la Prairie" were assembled at Kildonan.¹⁴⁰ This would make 440 men, a total that compares with the estimate of 380 to 450 used by Donald Smith, the Canadian commissioner, who reported later that his "sympathies were wholly with the Portage men."¹⁴¹ The figure of 440 is probably not far wide of the mark.

If Malmros's estimate is accurate the Indian component of the "force" must have been relatively conspicuous in the vicinity of the Kildonan church. This is borne out by Charles Mair's statement that Major Boulton had to assign two men, J. Dilworth and Dan Sissons, to protect Parisien from Indians who threatened to kill him.¹⁴² Alexander Begg recorded in his journal on February 16: "Prince's Indians are also there and have torches prepared to set fire to Fort Garry – bringing Indians into the affair is wrong".¹⁴³ On the 19th, when Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland visited Riel and begged for the lives of Boulton and the others, Riel was reported to have replied, "You have saved three lives – but Captain Bolton must suffer, Indians have been raised, and the homes of our men are threatened".¹⁴⁴ Four years later when Riel wrote his "Memoir" he used the expression "two or three hundred savages, getting ready to march on Fort Garry".¹⁴⁵ Clearly the presence of the Indians aroused apprehensions, and no doubt these were strongest in Kildonan itself. The influence of the Sutherlands was strong there too.

It seems very clear that neither Schultz nor any member of the "general council" appears to have been able to impose even a rough organization on the assembled men. Surely a "captain" could have been chosen for each ten or twenty soldiers, but none of the sources mentions anything of the kind. Had the "general council" assumed that William Gaddy – now a prisoner

in Fort Garry – would bring such an order into being when he arrived?¹⁴⁶ What of Edward Hay and his nascent interest in things military? What of Thomas Scott and others like him alleged to have known service in the militia in Ontario? Did not some military form of organization seem desirable to them as they saw the “mob” which had assembled? What of Schultz himself? One biographer has asserted that Schultz was raised in the “military atmosphere” of Amherstburg, Ontario.¹⁴⁷ Did not some form of military organization occur to him? Yet the only image we have of him at this point is that suggested by Mrs. Bernard Ross. She had just left Miss Victoria McVicar at McBeth’s house and “met Dr. Schultz in the hall”. He was saying, “War! War!”¹⁴⁸ Was Schultz preoccupied with preserving the secret that he was not a trained surgeon while having to work along with Dr. Beddome to probe for the ball that had lodged somewhere in Sutherland’s breast?

Bishop Taché stated under oath in 1874 that he was told by the Rev. Black of the kind of warlike moves which Schultz and his “general council” were contemplating:

... a consultation was held in his own room, at which it was proposed to go and seize [Taché’s] palace and ... cathedral, fortify them, and have cannons placed there with which to fight the parties across the river. Some of the party, however, objected to that, as the French people generally being Catholics, considered the palace and the cathedral sacred, and it would only provoke them and cause those already not under arms to rally to the Provisional Government. Finally the idea was abandoned altogether.¹⁴⁹

It was February in the Red River Settlement. There was considerable snow.¹⁵⁰ The day was “frosty”.¹⁵¹ This “Council” was proposing to take a cannon along the winter road on the ice of the river and mount it somewhere in St. Boniface.¹⁵² There it was to bombard Fort Garry. Charles Mair is our authority on this point. Had scouts been sent out to see what the “provisionals” were doing? Had arrangements been made to guard the flanks of the force, so it would not walk into a trap? Had gunners been trained in the art of loading and firing a cannon?

If we can judge by the remarks of Major Boulton the answer in each case was probably in the negative:

I had much difficulty in withstanding the excitement of the assembled force, who thought further action should be pressed. I argued with them that the object for which the expedition had been undertaken was gained, in the release of the prisoners... I also cautioned them that while it was a legitimate effort on their part to make, the moment we attempted anything further we were as amenable to the law as were Riel and his followers, and would be responsible for any danger that might threaten the settlement. These counsels prevailed, though an aggressive policy was abandoned with GREAT RELUCTANCE [emphasis mine] by many, who thought that we should show more courage in withstanding Riel. This discussion took up some time....¹⁵³

Finally we must look at the policies of these men to get some idea of how they saw the future of the Red River Settlement. No minute books of their meetings are known to exist, but four summaries have survived.¹⁵⁴ We must turn to these now. The release of the prisoners in Fort Garry was, of course, the chief point of the policy. All the sources agree on this. A second point was their desire to have nothing to do with the Provisional Government. One source specifically mentions repudiation of the acts of their delegates in agreeing to participate in it. Presumably this council would have settled for two governments in the Settlement, one for those parishes which took part in the affairs of the Provisional Government and one for the parishes represented in the "general council for the force." Then there was the request for the restitution of the property of John C. Schultz and William Dease, and for a guarantee that such confiscations would not take place again. One source mentions a demand for the safety of Schultz, and one mentions the freedom of all Settlement highways. Finally, this council made the first suggestion concerning an amnesty.¹⁵⁵

With this glance at the "general council" the curtain comes down on the participation of these men in the counter-movement, which Riel later referred to as the "Schultz provisional

government". We know that these men advised Schultz to leave the Settlement as soon as possible.

Schultz left on February 21 in company with Joseph Monkman.¹⁵⁶ They went by Fort Alexander, where they met George McVicar¹⁵⁷, and together the three made their way to Ontario by way of Fort Frances, Duluth, Superior City and Milwaukee. We shall hear more of them in due course.

The Portage party were now, to quote Charles Mair, "deserted and left 60 miles from home without provisions or bedding",¹⁵⁸ and had now to find their way somehow back to Portage la Prairie. Nothing better illustrates the contempt of the party for the Provisional Government and their reckless disregard for their own and others' safety than the manner of their attempted return. Riel had warned them when they were at Headingly two days earlier that if they did not return home they would be captured and made prisoner. They had since been responsible for the shooting and wounding of two natives of the Red River Settlement, and yet they boldly assumed that they could pass Fort Garry in broad daylight, armed and unscathed.

After the general dispersal at Kildonan most of the Portage party went to William Inkster's.¹⁵⁹ They were joined there for a time by some of the others who had remained at Kildonan with the "general council for the force".¹⁶⁰ Mair and some of his comrades announced that they were going to strike out across the prairie under cover of darkness and not go near Fort Garry. They advised the others to follow them, and this would have been a good idea. These gentlemen, however, said that they were very tired and hungry. They wanted to have supper and a sleep before setting out the next day.¹⁶¹ They had "Flatboat" McLean's firm assurance that Riel had promised that they could go by Fort Garry in peace. They also had the exhortations of the old pensioner Powers, who had been a sergeant-major in the British army. He argued that

[they] had come down like brave men and that [they] should go back like brave men, in a body.¹⁶²

So wrote Boulton, who had made the practical suggestion that they should disperse and accept the hospitality of friends in the various English parishes until the "excitement had quieted down", when they could return singly and unnoticed. Boulton's advice was not taken.

Boulton later said that he rebuked the old pensioner "for taking the responsibility upon himself of recommending so imprudent a course". However, the old pensioner must have been most persuasive and inspiring, for his suggestion was followed rather than Boulton's.¹⁶³ Just before they left Inkster's the news came that Gaddy had been captured and hanged, and the party had an explanation for the lack of success of Gaddy's part of the grand strategy.¹⁶⁴ The news, as it turned out, was not accurate. Gaddy had been captured, of course, but he was permitted to make his escape.¹⁶⁵ The news of the hanging did not impress these gentlemen of the Portage party, and they stuck with their plan to return home by way of Winnipeg.

After the capture of the Portage party, and in later years, the Provisional Government was to be accused of every kind of duplicity and bad faith in making prisoners of men who said they were on their way home. This makes it necessary for us to examine with care both what was said about Riel's promise and what participants said about what happened at the time of the capture.

The source for what Riel promised is in Donald Smith's "Report", and may be easily found in W.L. Morton's Birth of a Province:

Riel on being asked [by a young man named McLean] "if the party would be permitted to pass", was silent, and only, on being informed that they intended next day to use the route just outside the town, remarked "ah! that is good,"....¹⁶⁶

There are three accounts of the actions of the Portage party when it came into the vicinity of the town of Winnipeg. Major Boulton, in his Reminiscences, published sixteen years later, explained their decision this way:

As the travelled road would take us within a few hundred yards of Fort Garry, I thought it better to cross the open prairie to St. James Parish, which would keep us about a mile and a half from the Fort, although the difficulty of travelling in the deep snow was very great. In taking this course I was in hopes that Riel could see that we wished to avoid a conflict and to return to our homes peaceably... At last we started out across the plains in single file, following closely in each other's footsteps on account of the depth of the snow which was up to our waists....¹⁶⁷

This decision was not arrived at as calmly as Boulton's account would suggest. George Sanderson told about it in his "Memories":

When we got to the place near Fort Garry where the road made a detour we halted for a while and held a council. Some of the men from Eastern Canada wanted to show off and defy Riel's orders. They wanted to go straight across the forbidden ground. Old Mr. Pocha advised them to follow the road. I myself talked for some time and tried to induce the captain to let us follow the road... The young fellow named Scott swore and said we were a bunch of cowards. At that the Pochas, father and sons, took offence. Suza was going to slap him, but the old [man] stopped him and said, "Let him alone and perhaps he will yet find out that the little French... are not afraid of him, come captain, we will pass by the fort,["] off we started again I will not say we marched, we were all walking any way we could, the snow was deep.

When we came near the fort, a man on horseback shot out of the gate like an arrow, then another, and so on until ten or twelve came out....¹⁶⁸

It is clear from these accounts that there were in the Portage party different views of the sensible course to follow. Boulton went along with Scott's defiance and later wrote of the hope that it would be seen as evidence of a wish to avoid conflict. Pocha went along with it too in an

effort to keep peace in the group. However, taking a shortcut through the deep snow was seen by those in the Fort as an act of hostility, as an intolerable act of defiance.

On the flat Red River plain the approaching Portage men stood out in silhouette. When they left the road north of Winnipeg they were temporarily hidden from view by the buildings of the town. Then they returned to view to the west of the town, and the long train of walking men and horse-drawn sleighs could be seen easily, both by observers in the Fort and in the town. The drama of the capture was seen by Begg and entered in his "Justitia" letter to the Globe:

Nearer and nearer the two parties approached each other[,] the French plunging their horses through the deep snow at a hard gallop. At times when the horses would stick, the men would jump off, ease their animals, and then jump on again, hardly stopping their speed in doing so; thus showing them to be as expert horsemen as our Plains Indians. The Portage men now came to a halt, and awaited the coming of the French. Everyone on the lookout now expected to see a flash, and hear a report, the signal for the commencement of hostilities, but none came. At last the French and English seemed to mix up in one body. A considerable halt then occurred, when the whole party moved off in the direction of the Fort....¹⁶⁹

George Sanderson's account caught some of the details of the capture:

One rode toward us and stopped to speak, he held up a white handkerchief in his right hand. We stopped, but where was our captain or the brave young Scott? Neither came forward so old Mr. Pocha walked up to the rider and said in French, "Good day, what do you want?["]. ...¹⁷⁰

The reader is here reminded that the question of leadership had been ambiguous in the Portage party on the way to Kildonan. Then at Kildonan Boulton had spoken against aggressive action and, while his views were accepted, many thought that a cowardly course had been followed. Then the views of the old pensioner Powers had been preferred to Boulton's where the return route was concerned. As they trudged along single file through the deep snow Boulton

must have felt himself in an intolerable position where his leadership was concerned. This is the only explanation possible for what Murdoch McLeod said happened during the capture.

What Boulton had feared all along was coming true. Horsemen were charging from the Fort toward them. According to McLeod Boulton was so indecisive at the approach of the plunging horsemen that he (McLeod) sent old Mr. Pocha, who could speak French, to talk to the horsemen and call out replies to the rest in English. Boulton is said to have broken down and "cried like a child" at this point. McLeod insisted that Powers assume command. Powers refused, saying that he could not take over command of his superior officer in the field. McLeod pointed a pistol at Boulton's head and told him to "be a man and go right on". Pocha meanwhile had done what he was told, and now shouted that the Half-breeds had said not to fire, that they only wanted to shake hands and part as friends. At this McLeod said, "Don't believe him." McLeod then asked Dan Sissons to take the lead while he guarded the rear. The men, disheartened at Boulton's conduct, were doing nothing. Ambroise Lépine and other Métis came up and began shaking hands and speaking to Boulton, Powers and McLeod. O'Donoghue had remained somewhat apart, but now shouted to Lépine to give his orders, and Lépine did so. These were to take the party's guns, horses and sleighs and go to Fort Garry to shake hands with Riel. A Métis named Goulet came up to McLeod to take his rifle and cutter. McLeod said no Half-breed was going to take his rifle and struck Goulet between the eyes, knocking him down. McLeod then took aim at O'Donoghue, but Powers threw up the rifle barrel. This was all the violence of the capture.¹⁷¹ The others had been disarmed meanwhile¹⁷², and the combined party began to head for the Fort, O'Donoghue in the lead. McLeod, Powers and Scott had to take hold of Boulton and force him to get into the cutter. Very soon the Portage men were prisoners in the Fort.

One man had hidden himself behind a bush while the capture was taking place. Others had thrown their weapons away. When the leaders had a chance to count the men they noticed that a man was missing and some holsters were empty. Two men were detailed to hunt for the weapons and the missing man. It was then that Farquhar McLean was found and captured.¹⁷³

Historians have wondered about the reasons for the capture of the Portage party. In the light of what we now know it is difficult to see how the Provisional Government could have acted otherwise on the morning of February 17. Riel had urged restraint when the party had gone by the Fort on the 15th, and now there were two men so badly wounded as to be not expected to live. The Provisional Government – like any government – simply could not tolerate an armed band roving about the Settlement, impressing men, requisitioning supplies, taking prisoners and wounding them, especially when that band had acted in open defiance of it. Guards had been on the streets of Winnipeg all night and through the early morning, and would have to remain on the alert while such a band was at large. The Portage men would have to be prisoners-of-war until they would agree either to leave the country or to behave themselves.

¹ The phrase is from Le Méis, June 19, 1872.

² W.L. Morton (ed.), Begg's Journal (afterwards Begg's Journal), 281.

³ Begg's Journal, "Memoir by Louis Riel", 536.

⁴ Alexander Begg, The Creation of Manitoba (afterwards Begg, Creation), 280.

⁵ Globe, March 18, 1870, republished the dispatch to the Montreal Witness.

⁶ Begg's Journal, 307.

⁷ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870, article by "R. McC".

⁸ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, mentions Scott, Farmer and Setter; Boulton, Reminiscences, 101; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 226.

⁹ PAM MG12 Box 16/19 Schultz Papers, Mair to Schultz, May 10, 1870. The account published in R.B. Hill's History, pages 281 to 286 was probably written by J.J. Setter. See page 137: "he left with the Portage contingent to release the prisoners under Riel, or to retake Fort Garry if possible. His work in this respect is given in the following pages". Murdoch McLeod may have been a sixth (Hill, 281).

¹⁰ Boulton, Reminiscences, 101; Donald A. Smith's report in W.L. Morton (ed.), Birth of a Province (afterwards Birth), 35-6.

¹¹ Begg's Journal, 303.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870; Q.U.L. Charles Mair Papers, "J. Dilworth and Self", 1; "Charles Mair: A Document on the Red River Rebellion in CHR 1959, 221 (afterwards "Charles Mair: A Document"); A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 226; R.B. Hill, History of Manitoba, 281.

¹⁴ Boulton, Reminiscences, 102.

- ¹⁵ "J. Dilworth and Self", 1.
- ¹⁶ Boulton, Reminiscences, 103.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ Boulton, Reminiscences, 103-4.
- ¹⁹ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870; Boulton, Reminiscences, 104; Charles Mair wrote that it was during the blizzard at Headingly, "Charles Mair: A Document", 225; Garrioch, First Furrows, 227.
- ²⁰ "J. Dilworth and Self", 1; Begg's Journal, 330.
- ²¹ "J. Dilworth and Self", 1-2.
- ²² "Charles Mair: A Document", 222; Begg, Creation, 277; Charles Mair at a meeting in Toronto, Globe, April 7, 1870.
- ²³ Boulton, Reminiscences, 102.
- ²⁴ "J. Dilworth and Self", 2; "Charles Mair: A Document", 222; Note that the first document says Murdoch MacLeod and Susie Pocha, while the second one says Macleod and J.J. Sener. Sener's account agrees with the second. See Hill, History, 281.
- ²⁵ Montesquieu in De L'Esprit des Lois and J.J. Rousseau in Le Contrat Social.
- ²⁶ Begg's Journal, 303-4, entries for Feb. 10 and 11.
- ²⁷ O'Donnell, Manitoba As I Saw It (afterwards Manitoba), 35; Begg's Journal, 218; Begg, Creation, 164.
- ²⁸ O'Donnell, Manitoba, 36.
- ²⁹ "Graham", entry for Dec. 7.
- ³⁰ "Graham", Dec. 11.
- ³¹ "Graham", Jan. 12.
- ³² O'Donnell, Manitoba, 36.
- ³³ "Graham", Dec. 11.
- ³⁴ "Graham", Dec. 8, Dec. 29.
- ³⁵ "Graham", Dec. 13, 19, 25.
- ³⁶ "Graham", Dec. 25.
- ³⁷ "Graham", Dec. 31.
- ³⁸ "Graham", Dec. 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 26, Jan. 2, 9, 23.
- ³⁹ "Graham", Dec. 9, 16, 23, 29, Jan. 2, 9, 23.
- ⁴⁰ "Graham", Dec. 30.
- ⁴¹ "Graham", Jan. 24.
- ⁴² Begg's Journal, 252.
- ⁴³ Begg's Journal, 234.
- ⁴⁴ Begg's Journal, 297.
- ⁴⁵ "Graham", Dec. 24, 25.
- ⁴⁶ "Graham", Jan. 1.
- ⁴⁷ "Graham", Dec. 31.
- ⁴⁸ G.D. McVicar, in a letter to the Toronto Leader, April 10, 1870.
- ⁴⁹ "Graham", Jan. 1.
- ⁵⁰ Begg's Journal, 252.
- ⁵¹ Begg's Journal, 303.
- ⁵² "Graham", Feb. 12; Begg's Journal, 305.
- ⁵³ Begg's Journal, 305.
- ⁵⁴ "Graham", Feb. 12.
- ⁵⁵ Begg's Journal, 305-6. The names of the prisoners are given.
- ⁵⁶ "Graham", Feb. 12.
- ⁵⁷ "Graham", Dec. 24.
- ⁵⁸ "Graham", Dec. 25.
- ⁵⁹ "Graham", Dec. 3.
- ⁶⁰ Telegraph, July 15, 1870. Letter dated in St. Paul, July 10, and signed "A. W. Graham".
- ⁶¹ Begg's Journal, 306.
- ⁶² "Graham", Feb. 14.
- ⁶³ Begg's Journal, 306.
- ⁶⁴ "Graham", Feb. 12; Begg's Journal, 306.
- ⁶⁵ Begg, Creation, 277.

- ⁶⁶ Begg's Journal, 307; Boulton, Reminiscences, 105.
- ⁶⁷ "J. Dilworth and Self", 2; Begg's Journal, 307; Boulton, Reminiscences, 105; "Charles Mair: A Document", 222.
- ⁶⁸ "Charles Mair: A Document", 222; "J. Dilworth and Self", 2; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 227.
- ⁶⁹ Boulton, Reminiscences, 106.
- ⁷⁰ "J. Dilworth and Self", 2.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² Boulton, Reminiscences, 107.
- ⁷³ New Nation, Feb. 18, 1870.
- ⁷⁴ Boulton, Reminiscences, 105.
- ⁷⁵ "Charles Mair: A Document", 222; "J. Dilworth and Self", 2; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 228. See also Ellen Cooke, "Norquays in the Red River Disturbances", in Manitoba Pageant, Winter, 1976.
- ⁷⁶ Begg's Journal, 308.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ "Graham", Feb. 15: "About 8 p.m. we were offered a parole oath and we are now out in the town."
- ⁸⁰ Boulton, Reminiscences, 106.
- ⁸¹ Boulton, Reminiscences, 107.
- ⁸² Boulton, Reminiscences, 107, mentions Parisien; Begg's Journal, 309, mentions all three; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870, mentions Parisien and McKenney; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 228, mentions Parisien.
- ⁸³ Boulton, Reminiscences, 107, gives the detail of the pulpit; "J. Dilworth and Self", 3, mentions Garrioch, as does Setter's account in Hill, History, 285; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, states that Garrioch was the brother of the writer.
- ⁸⁴ Begg's Journal, 310.
- ⁸⁵ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870.
- ⁸⁶ Globe, March 18, 1870; Montreal Witness report dated Feb. 19; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870.
- ⁸⁷ "Charles Mair: A Document", 222-3; Begg's Journal, 309.
- ⁸⁸ This is the letter referred to in Begg's Journal, 310.
- ⁸⁹ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁹¹ "J. Dilworth and Self", 3.
- ⁹² The account that follows is based on "J. Dilworth and Self", 2-4.
- ⁹³ Sutherland was the son of John Sutherland, Point Douglas.
- ⁹⁴ "Charles Mair: A Document", 223.
- ⁹⁵ "J. Dilworth and Self", 4.
- ⁹⁶ Le Méris, April 25, 1874.
- ⁹⁷ Setter's account in Hill's History, 285.
- ⁹⁸ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, Apr. 2, 1870; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 228.
- ⁹⁹ "J. Dilworth and Self", 4.
- ¹⁰⁰ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870.
- ¹⁰¹ Healy, Women of Red River, 222-4; Hart's account is in the 1921 Annual Report of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 229; Charles Mair's accounts have already been mentioned.
- ¹⁰² Boulton, Reminiscences, 109; Garrioch, First Furrows, 229.
- ¹⁰³ Boulton, Reminiscences, 108.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hill, History, 285.
- ¹⁰⁵ Le Méris, April 25, 1874; A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, gives no names.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Charles Mair: A Document", 223.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁸ Begg's Journal, 314.
- ¹⁰⁹ PAM New Nation, April 8, 1870.
- ¹¹⁰ Globe, March 18, 1870, Montreal Witness report dated Feb. 19.
- ¹¹¹ "J. Dilworth and Self", 4; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870.
- ¹¹² "Charles Mair: A Document", 223.
- ¹¹³ Begg's Journal, 310.
- ¹¹⁴ Globe, March 12, 1870, "Justitia's" letter No. 11, dated Feb. 18, 1870.
- ¹¹⁵ Begg's Journal, 310.

- ¹¹⁶ Begg's Journal, 311.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁸ W.L. Morton (ed.), Birth, Report of Donald A. Smith, 35; "Charles Mair: A Document", 223.
- ¹¹⁹ Begg's Journal, 312; Schmidt's Memoir, 473; "Report... 1874", Taché's deposition, 22, Taché to Howe, March 11, 1870.
- ¹²⁰ W.L. Morton (ed.), Birth, Report of Donald A. Smith, 35.
- ¹²¹ Begg's Journal, 311.
- ¹²² Begg's Journal, 312.
- ¹²³ Globe, March 18, 1870, Montreal Witness report dated Feb. 19.
- ¹²⁴ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870. "Hayes" should be Hay. "Hodges" should be Hodgson. "Beddame" should be Beddome.
- ¹²⁵ "Charles Mair: A Document", 223.
- ¹²⁶ A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 230.
- ¹²⁷ PAM MG12 E3 Box 16/19 Schultz Papers, Mair to Schultz, May 10, 1870.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid.
- ¹²⁹ D.N. Sprague and R.P. Fryc, The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation.
- ¹³⁰ For example, the Gunn family. See Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. X, entry "Gunn", 324.
- ¹³¹ Begg's Journal, 319.
- ¹³² Begg's Journal, 318.
- ¹³³ PAM MG12 E3 Box 16/19 Schultz Papers, Schultz to Archibald, Sept. 6, 1870.
- ¹³⁴ PAC MG26 A Vol. 187-8, Archibald to Macdonald, Jan. 16, 1871.
- ¹³⁵ North Western, Oct. 26, 1869.
- ¹³⁶ "Report... 1874", Taché's deposition, 13: "This Hallett was... one of the ring-leaders in the last prison-breaking."
- ¹³⁷ J.J. Hargrave, Red River, 426.
- ¹³⁸ George McVicar, on his way to Ontario with Schutz, wrote from Fort Frances on March 14 to his friend Alex Polson: "How was it that Kildonan did not turn out in that abortive movement?" PAM MG3 B9, McVicar to Alex Polson, March 14, 1870.
- ¹³⁹ "Report... 1874", Taché's deposition, 25.
- ¹⁴⁰ USNARS microfilm T24, Roll 1, Malmros to Davis, Feb. 22, 1870.
- ¹⁴¹ W.L. Morton (ed.), Birth, report of Donald Smith, 35.
- ¹⁴² "Dilworth and Self", 4.
- ¹⁴³ Begg's Journal, 312.
- ¹⁴⁴ Begg's Journal, 317.
- ¹⁴⁵ Begg's Journal, 536.
- ¹⁴⁶ Gaddy had been a leader in the plains hunt. Begg's Journal, 307, footnote 3 from page 306.
- ¹⁴⁷ F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba, Vol. III, 5.
- ¹⁴⁸ W.J. Healy, Women of Red River, 230.
- ¹⁴⁹ "Report... 1874", Taché's deposition, 25; Queen's University Archives, Charles Mair Papers, "Notes On Early Rebellion", 45-6.
- ¹⁵⁰ "Justitia" wrote of horses having to "plunge" through the snow; Globe, March 12, 1870.
- ¹⁵¹ Begg's Journal, 309.
- ¹⁵² "J. Dilworth and Self", 3.
- ¹⁵³ Boulton, Reminiscences, 111.
- ¹⁵⁴ Three were published: St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870; Globe, March 18, report published in Montreal Daily Witness; Globe, March 12, report by "Justitia". Another was entered in Begg's Journal, 310.
- ¹⁵⁵ New Nation, Feb. 18, 1870.
- ¹⁵⁶ A.D. Garrioch, First Furrows, 236.
- ¹⁵⁷ PAM MG3 B9, McVicar Papers, George McVicar to Alex Polson, March 14 and April 13, 1870.
- ¹⁵⁸ "J. Dilworth and Self", 4.
- ¹⁵⁹ There is a problem here. "J. Dilworth and Self", 4, and "Charles Mair: A Document", 223, mention "Inkster's", while Boulton, Reminiscences, 112, mentions "Mr. Boyd's Store at Point Douglass [sic]" as does Garrioch, First Furrows.
- ¹⁶⁰ "Charles Mair: A Document", 223.
- ¹⁶¹ Boulton, Reminiscences, 112.
- ¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Boulton, *Reminiscences*, 113. The report was recorded by Begg the same day: *Begg's Journal*, 312-3.

¹⁶⁵ *Begg's Journal*. "Memoir by Louis Riel", 537.

¹⁶⁶ W.L. Morton (ed.), *Birth*, Donald Smith's report, 35. See also E.H. Oliver, *The Canadian Northwest...*, Vol. 2, 928.

¹⁶⁷ Boulton, *Reminiscences*, 113.

¹⁶⁸ Sanderson's "Memories", 128-9.

¹⁶⁹ *Globe*, March 12, 1870, "Justitia" No. 11.

¹⁷⁰ Sanderson's "Memories", 128-9.

¹⁷¹ "Charles Mair: A Document", 224.

¹⁷² "J. Dilworth and Self", 4, agrees that the party was disarmed.

¹⁷³ Sanderson's "Memories", 129; *Globe*, March 12, 1870, "Justitia" No. 11.

The Portage Party

For purposes of this study the Portage party may be identified in four parts: those taken prisoner before February 17; those taken prisoner on February 17; a group of men who were never taken prisoner but whose names have come to us from several sources; a man found in no printed record but mentioned by his father at an election meeting in 1870 as having been made a prisoner.

Those taken prisoner before February 17 were William Gaddy and H.L. Sabine.¹

A list of the men taken prisoner on February 17 was published in the New Nation for February 18, 1870. It is probable that Alexander Begg copied this list into his journal.² What is essentially the same list was published in Gunn and Tuttle's History of Manitoba in 1880. For some reason, probably a misreading of handwriting, they omitted John Ivy and added James Joy. Robert Hill did the same in 1890, misspelling several names and changing some initials in the process. Since a John Ivy later made claim for imprisonment and was paid for 35 days' imprisonment we can probably assume that this is the correct name.³

From the evidence of George Sanderson, which has recently become available in his "Memories", we now know that the name George Sandison in the list must be changed to George Sanderson. He was a brother of the James Sanderson of the list. We also know that the name Farquhar McLean must be added to the list. McLean was found hiding in a ditch after the other prisoners had been established in the Fort.⁴

In addition, Sanderson's information allows us to assume that the name Paquin should be changed to Pocha. He stated that "old Mr. Pocha and his three sons, Suza, William and Johnny" were in the Portage party. According to Sanderson Mr. Pocha, Sr., was one of those who wished

to do the prudent thing and remain on the road as the men made their way home. Suza was one who took offense at Scott's remarks and was going to "slap him".

Sanderson's revelations make other accounts more credible. In one of the first published accounts of the gathering at Kildonan the St. Paul Daily Pioneer reported that a "young fellow named Pochain from the High Bluff" captured Parisien.⁵ Rev. A.C. Garrioch stated in his First Furrows that "the Pochien brothers of High Bluff" used a tomahawk on Parisien.⁶

There may have been four Pochas in the Portage party, but only three later made claims for imprisonment. In the "Schedule of Claims" three men from High Bluff are listed under the name of "Poelie". This is obviously a misreading of the handwritten word "Pocha". There is a "Joseph", a "Joseph, jun." and a "William". The "William" along with the father and son makes it almost certain that these are the Pochas of Sanderson's account.⁷

Members of the Portage party never taken prisoner are to be found listed in the works of Rev. A.C. Garrioch,⁸ R.B. Hill⁹ and Charles Mair.¹⁰ They include the following: Martin Burnell, John Cameron, George Garrioch, Wm. B. Hall, Charles Mair, Francis Ogletree and J.J. Setter.

It is possible that six men whose names appear in the "Schedule of Claims" as claiming compensation for imprisonment were also members of the Portage party. They are George Gunn, George McKay, David Spence, David Tait and David Taylor of Poplar Point, and Charles House of Portage la Prairie. We cannot be certain of this, however, and their names have not been included in the accompanying list.

Finally, at an election meeting held at Poplar Point on November 30, 1870, James Tanner stated that his son had been a member of the Portage party and had got himself "imprisoned for his efforts".¹¹ Young Tanner's name is not to be found in the "Schedule of Claims".

The Portage Party

R. Adams	M. Morrison
Wilder Bartlett	A. Murray
Thomas Baxter	Geo. Newcomb
W.G. Bird	Francis Ogletree
Captain Boulton	Alex Parker
Magnus Brown	George Parker
Martin Burnell	Mr. Pocha, sr.
John Cameron	William Pocha
Robert Dennison	Suza (Jos. jr) (?) Pocha
J. Dilworth	Johnny Pocha
Wm. Dilworth	Sergeant Powers
Wm. Farmer	H.L. Sabine
Wm. Gaddy	W. Salter
George Garrioch	George Sanderson
Wm. B. Hall	James Sanderson
John Ivy	Thomas Scott
James Jock	J.J. Setter
Charles Mair	Dan Sissons
James McBain	Jos. Smith
Rob. McBain	Lawrence Smith
Arch. McDonald	W. Sutherland
Chas. McDonald	John Switzer
John McKay	_____ Tanner
Alex McLean	A. Taylor
Farquhar McLean	D. Taylor
John McLean	H. Taylor
Murdoch McLeod	John Taylor
Alex McPherson	H. Williams
Chas. Millan	Henry Woodington
J.B. Morrison	George Wylds

¹ Begg's Journal, 306.

² Begg's Journal, 315-6.

³ Canada, Sessional Papers, 1872 (No. 19), "Schedule of Claims Arising Out of the Late Insurrection at Red River" (afterwards "Schedule").

⁴ Irene Spry, "The 'Memories' of George William Sanderson", in Canadian Ethnic Studies, XVII, 2, 85.

⁵ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870, Article by "R. McC".

⁶ A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 228.

⁷ "Schedule".

⁸ A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows, 230.

⁹ R.B. Hill, History of Manitoba, 286-7.

¹⁰ Charles Mair, "A Document", 223.

¹¹ Manitoban, Dec. 10, 1870.

Thomas Scott

It is impossible to write about the events of 1869-1872 without dealing in some detail with the execution of Thomas Scott by a firing squad of the Provisional Government.¹ There are difficulties in doing this, however, which may not be apparent to the casual reader. The execution became a "cause célèbre" and was the subject of so much ill-informed newspaper attention in 1870, in 1874 and again in 1885, that getting at the truth involves stripping away layer after layer of folk-lore, conjecture, inaccurate reporting, misrepresentation and outright falsehood. Nevertheless, the effort must be made.

What is known of Thomas Scott? Lord Dufferin, when he was Governor General of Canada, stated that Scott's parents then lived on his estate as tenant farmers in the neighborhood of Clondeboye, County Down, Ireland. Efforts made by researchers to find a record of his birth or baptism there have not been successful.² It is believed that Scott emigrated to Canada in the 1860s and worked as a laborer, probably in Hastings County in what was then Canada West.³ The local history for that area, Historic Hastings, sheds no new light on Scott, but quotes from G.F.G. Stanley's Louis Riel: "According to his company commander he was the 'finest looking man in the battalion... about six feet two inches in height and twenty-five years of age... an Orangeman, loyal to the back-bone.'"⁴ Here Stanley used the same words that Rev. George Young had used in his Manitoba Memories 66 years previously, quoting "Captain Rawe" of Madoc, Ontario, commander of Scott's militia company at Stirling, Ontario.⁵ The 49th Regiment, 'Hastings Rifles' was authorized on September 14, 1866, as the '49th Hastings Battalion of Infantry', according to the book The Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army.⁶ The Stirling Company was No. 2 Company in that Battalion. A nominal roll and covering letter from Captain G.H. Boulter dated April 10, 1866, as well as company pay lists are in the Public

Archives of Canada.⁷ The name Thomas Scott does not appear. A search of the pay lists and the registers of officers for the Hastings Militia for the years 1866 to 1870 did not produce any reference to the name of Thomas Scott.⁸

Several alleged photographs of Scott appear in collections. One, from the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, appears in Stanley's Louis Riel, opposite page 147. Another is reproduced in Norman Shrive's Charles Mair. Literary Nationalist between pages 144 and 145, and was found in the Mair papers at Queen's University. Opinions differ as to whether they portray the same man. The man in the photo used by Stanley is tall. Henry Woodington, who escaped with Scott, described him as "over six feet in height, with a short body and very long legs."⁹ The photo used by Shrive is of the head only, so we can only say that someone, presumably Charles Mair, thought that it was of Thomas Scott.

A "James" Scott, of Toronto, who arrived by steamer "International" at Fort Garry on Thursday, June 24, 1869, is believed to be the man of our study.¹⁰ Two men who arrived with him, F.G. Mogridge, of Guelph, and William Allen, of Port Huron, apparently went with him to work with Snow's party at Oak Point shortly after their arrival. They were in court along with Thomas Scott and George Fortney in October, 1869, on a charge of aggravated assault arising from the incident at Oak Point.¹¹ After being fired by Snow the four men evidently went to Winnipeg. George Fortney went to work for James Ross, but it is not clear what the others did.¹² The Manitoba News-Letter recalled that Scott had taken up a collection of funds with which to welcome Lieutenant-governor-designate McDougall upon his arrival in the Settlement.¹³ P.G. Laurie recorded that Scott took part in the activities of the "Canadian" party using Garratt House as headquarters in late November.¹⁴ Again Scott was in the company of Mogridge and Allen.¹⁵ These men enlisted in the company of Canadians which took possession of the Schultz houses

and later surrendered to the Métis on December 7.¹⁶ Their names are to be found in the lists of prisoners made by Alexander Begg for his journal, Scott's without a Christian name.¹⁷ Scott escaped with Woodington and others on January 9 and made his way to Portage la Prairie.¹⁸ In January and early February Scott became part of the secret organization of eight people brought together by William Gaddy with the aim of releasing William Hallett and his fellow prisoners.¹⁹ Scott's part in this effort has just been described in the last chapter.

Scott was imprisoned along with the rest of the Portage party on February 17, 1870.²⁰ Riel and the Provisional Government instantly used these prisoners in an attempt to repair the damage which the gathering at Kildonan had done to Settlement unity. Four of the prisoners – Boulton, George Parker, Thomas Scott and John Taylor – were, to use Begg's words, "condemned to be shot".²¹ George Parker, according to Donald Smith's report, had "made himself particularly obnoxious by his violent conduct."²² Boulton and Scott, of course, had been leaders and prominent in the events at Kildonan. John Taylor was considered to be a turn-coat, having a few days earlier been part of the convention which established the Provisional Government. No sooner was the announcement of their sentence made than several people came forward to plead for the lives of the condemned men. Especially prominent among these suppliants were Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland, the parents of the young man whom Parisien had shot. Begg recorded that "Riel was very much affected, and said, 'You have saved three lives – but Captain Boulton must suffer. Indians have been raised and the homes of our men are threatened.'²³ The three men pardoned were Parker, Scott and Taylor. Boulton's life was spared too, of course, but not before many suppliants had begged for mercy and agreed that it was, in fact, important that the Provisional Government should be allowed to give the Settlement peace.²⁴

It must be emphasized here that Scott was pardoned along with Parker and Taylor and before Boulton. The Métis leaders who knew of Scott's activities over a period of seven months did not consider any of them serious enough – given all the circumstances – to warrant carrying out the death sentence. This gives the lie to allegations which are to be found in the literature surrounding Scott's execution: that Scott was executed because Riel wanted revenge for an insult of the previous autumn; that Scott was executed because "it was blood that Riel wanted"; etc. If these had really been reasons for executing Scott this execution would have been carried out then. That he was not executed, but pardoned, means that we have to look as carefully as possible at what is known of the nearly two weeks between his pardon and his execution.

Whatever may have been Scott's behavior during his first imprisonment there is no doubt about his behavior during the second. George Sanderson, who was a member of the Portage party, has told in his "Memories" that Scott's behavior in prison was so intolerable that his own colleagues asked that he should be removed from their quarters.²⁵ This was written many years after the event, and confirms what Le Courier de St. Hyacinthe quoted Boulton as saying in St. Boniface immediately after his release. Boulton stated that he "asked to be allowed in to Scott's room in order to make him be quiet."²⁶ Sanderson stated that there was "no doubt that [Scott] would have been spared and let out" when the rest were "had he behaved himself".²⁷

Sanderson said that the prisoners were "well treated" and remarked that their food was almost the same as the guards' food except that the guards had sugar for their tea, while the prisoners had none.²⁸ "We would have been quite comfortable", Sanderson told his niece, "had it not been for that man Scott making such a racket, he would kick the board partition, yell and curse, and was most impudent to the guard."

One night when Scott was especially troublesome and noisy, a guard walked in and asked what all the noise was about, he said,

"Now you fellows had better be quiet, if I have to come in again tonight I will bring a billy with me and the man who is making the noise will get it over the head."²⁹

Small wonder that his fellow prisoners asked that he be removed from their quarters.

The Rev. George Young was one of very few people allowed to visit the prisoners regularly, and he is probably the source for Begg's observation of March 1 that the Canadian prisoners had been "separated from those belonging to the country under confinement and the former are kept a great deal more strict than were those who were released some time ago." By that time Scott was "in irons for having been indiscreet in the use of his tongue while in prison."³⁰

How can we account for Scott's behavior in his second imprisonment?

During his first confinement Scott had been one of a group of men with a common background who considered themselves as soldiers enlisted at the call of their country. This sustained them during the long winter weeks and kept up their morale.

Quite different was the situation in the Portage party made prisoners in February of 1870. One division was created by the decision which led to their imprisonment, and it may well be that it provides the key to Scott's behavior. George Sanderson told about this decision:

When we got to the place near Fort Garry where the road made a detour we halted for a while and held a council. Some of the men from eastern Canada wanted to show off and defy Riel's orders. They wanted to go straight across the forbidden ground. Old Mr. Pocha advised them to follow the road. I myself talked for some time and tried to induce the captain to let us follow the road. For my part I was not afraid of the French half-breeds, though we were just forty-four in number, and there were five hundred men in the fort. I knew Riel and many of his adherents; in fact I was related to some of his leaders.

The young fellow named Scott swore and said we were a bunch of cowards. At that the Pochas, father and sons took offence, Suza was going to slap him but the old [man] stopped him and said, "Let

him alone and perhaps he will yet find out that the little French... are not afraid of him, come captain, we will pass by the fort["], off we started again. I will not say we marched, we were all walking any way we could, the snow was deep.³¹

Scott is thus identified by Sanderson as one of those who, along with the old pensioner Powers of Boulton's account, urged that the party show defiance to the Provisional Government by taking the short-cut instead of following the road.³²

If Scott and Suza Pocha nearly came to blows in this council in the open we can assume that while in confinement Pocha and others probably came close to blows with Scott again as they reminded him that but for his advice they would be safe in their homes in the western parishes. Scott and Powers, possibly also Farmer, Newcombe and Parker, may well have had to be separated from the others almost immediately for the sake of keeping the peace in confined quarters.

There was another division too. Sanderson and his companions "belonging to the country" were acquainted with many of their guards. Sanderson recalled that Jean Demers spoke to him on the way into the fort, asking him to point out Mr. McLean, a man known to have been established at Portage la Prairie for several years.³³ And Suza Berlea, who was on guard duty at the time of Scott's execution, was Sanderson's uncle.³⁴ And Sanderson recalled that a Roman Catholic priest "made a special intercession" for the prisoners to see Riel and his guards. He asked them to use the prisoners "as well as they could" as they were just poor natives like themselves and it was "not their fault they were captives."³⁵

It is probable that nothing in Scott's experience had prepared him for the challenges he encountered in this imprisonment. Clearly he did not possess the resources of pensioner Powers, another man who had made himself conspicuous in his advice to defy Riel and use the shortcut, and therefore was responsible for what happened. Powers behaved himself and was released

with the others. Scott so lost control of himself that he became obnoxious to his fellow prisoners.

At the end of February Murdoch McLeod and Scott succeeded in forcing the door of their room, attacked the guards and urged their companions to do the same. Scott was so violent, Riel wrote, "that some of the Métis, in a fit of exasperation seized him, dragged him out and were preparing to sacrifice him when one of the French councillors came by, snatched him away from them, and sent him back under guard to his cell."³⁶ Scott's life had been saved again. He was put in irons in a room by himself.³⁷

The incident was reported to Riel in such a way that he realized he had a major crisis to deal with. First he had to pacify his guards and then he had to do what he could to persuade Scott to behave. George Sanderson overheard one of Riel's efforts and told about it in his "Memories".

When Riel came in Scott says, "Where are my papers?" Riel answered, "I do not know anything about your papers, what sort of papers did you have?" Scott then cursed, "You God damn son of a bitch, I will have my papers in spite of you." He was awfully mad. Riel answered, very quietly. "That's no way to speak to a human being, a man like you coming from a civilized part of the country should know better than use such language, you will all get your papers and letters back before you leave here."³⁸

Sanderson said that after that Scott was taken out of his room "once or twice, I forgot just how many times."³⁹ Beyond the knowledge of Sanderson and the other prisoners a struggle was going on between the exasperated guards, who wanted Scott taken before a court-martial, and the men of the Provisional Government council, upon whom affairs of state were then pressing very hard.⁴⁰ There were many reasons for not holding a court-martial just then. Plans had to be made for the sessions of the first parliament of the Provisional Government.⁴¹ Arrangements had to be made for provisioning of families at White Horse Plains whose men had gone into Provisional

Government service.⁴² People were complaining about the hardships caused by the shutting down of Robert Tait's mill.⁴³ In the Fort itself it was necessary to take steps to maintain discipline among the men. These were men of what could be called Riel's praetorian guard. These were men whose loyalty had been proved during five months of dedicated service: service on the snow at St. Norbert, in the cold at the outdoor convention of January, and in the deep snow at the time of the capture of the Portage party. When these men complained the Provisional Government had to listen. The problem of Thomas Scott's insolent behavior would not go away. Riel later wrote about what followed:

All demanded that Scott be taken before a Council of War. It must not be imagined that Scott was at once delivered to a court-martial. The President of the Provisional Government sought to avoid that extremity, by having Scott brought before him. He invited him to consider his position seriously, begging him, so to speak, whatever his convictions, to be silent and remain quiet in prison; so that, said the President, I may have a reason for preventing your being brought before the Council of the Adjutant-General, as the Métis soldiers loudly insist.⁴⁴

"Scott," Riel recorded, "scorned everybody, and persisted in his defiant conduct." "The third of March we made Scott appear before a council of war. He was examined with sworn testimony: he was convicted and condemned to death."⁴⁵

There is evidence that the Métis leaders had given considerable thought to the problem posed by the presence of the intractable Scott. Father Georges Dugas recalled that in discussions with people like Boulton, who interceded on Scott's behalf, Riel answered like this:

If I set him free, before two weeks have passed it won't be one life but several lives which will be sacrificed, since he is determined to conspire against the Provisional Government as soon as he's free.⁴⁶

Scott's obstinacy persisted even when he was on trial for his life. When Elzéar Lagimodière suggested that it would be better to exile Scott, and offered to take him to the border, Scott replied, "Take me there if you will. I will be back as soon as you."⁴⁷

What is known of the culmination of the three-hour court-martial is from the evidence of Joseph Nolin, who was interpreter and secretary at the court-martial. Nolin testified at the trial of Ambroise Lépine in 1874:

The first motion for death was by [J.] Ritchot, seconded by André Nault. Goulet and Delorme voted yea along with the mover and seconder. Lajemoniere [sic] voted that it would be better to exile him. Baptiste Lépine voted nay. Ambroise [Lépine] said the majority want his death so he shall be put to death.⁴⁸

The Rev. George Young has written that Riel sent for him to come and help prepare the convicted man to face the prospect of death. The Courrier de St. Hyacinthe reported that Scott told Young that he belonged to no religion. Young told Riel this, no doubt in an effort to gain more time or even a stay of execution. Riel suggested that Young try using the crucifix. Then Riel ordered "all the soldiers of the fort to fall on their knees and pray for the soul of the condemned man."⁴⁹ We have it on Donald Smith's authority that the priest leading the men in prayer was Father Lestanc.⁵⁰

Scott was executed by firing-squad on Friday, March 4, 1870.⁵¹ Alexander Begg recorded that Scott fell forward, pierced in four places.⁵² Begg was not quite correct, although he was correct in the number of bullets which found their mark. André Nault, the commander, later stated that "three bullets, two of which took effect in full chest, struck Scott and he fell. Before I had time to make sure whether he was dead one Guillemette, who was a little intoxicated, ran to the body, turned it over, and discharged his revolver at his head." The corpse was then placed in a "rough coffin" and taken to one of the bastions of the Fort.⁵³

Meanwhile, in the prisoners' quarters, George Sanderson asked his uncle Suza Berlea what had become of Scott. Suza said, "Be very careful," and beckoned Sanderson to follow him out. They went into one of the bastions and looked out the window. "There was an empty barrel lying on the snow," remembered Sanderson, "and beside it the snow was stained with blood. I can assure you we all felt bad as he was one that went in with us. There is no doubt that he would have been spared and let out when we were, had he behaved himself."⁵⁴

Alexander Begg recorded on March 5 that Scott was buried inside the Fort.⁵⁵ Both the Bishop of Rupert's Land, Robert Machray, and the Rev. George Young asked for the body, hoping to bury it in the Presbyterian cemetery, five miles to the north.⁵⁶ This request was refused. André Nault said that the reason for this was that they did not want Scott's burial place to be known because the Orangemen would "make a sort of pilgrimage-ground of it." Some time after midnight following Scott's execution Louis Riel, accompanied by André Nault, Elzéar Lagimodière and Damase Harrison, went to the bastion where Scott's coffin had been placed and put it on a sleigh. The four men swore each other to secrecy about what they were going to do and drove down the Assiniboine and Red rivers to St. John's Protestant Cemetery. There they buried the body. André Nault revealed the secret when all the others were dead and he was a very old man.⁵⁷ There is no reason to doubt that the account given in A.G. Morice's A Critical History of the Red River Insurrection is correct, and that Scott's body lies in an unmarked grave in St. John's Protestant Cemetery.

The significance of the execution of Thomas Scott lies in the use of it that was made in Ontario during the spring and summer of 1870 and at Fort Garry in October of 1870.

Riel was tried for the "murder"⁵⁸ of Thomas Scott and found guilty at secret meetings in Toronto between April 2nd and April 6th of 1870.⁵⁹ The results of the decisions made at these

meetings were seen very soon in great "indignation meetings" in Toronto, Cobourg, Belleville, Prescott and elsewhere. These were reported in the newspapers at the time and Canadian government policy was profoundly influenced in many ways.⁶⁰ The gentlemen who arranged for the meetings were touching the levers of power usually managed by Sir John A. Macdonald.⁶¹ The result was paralysis, except where the policies of the government and of "Canada First" coincided.

Nearly forty years later Colonel G.T. Denison described in detail how he and the men of "Canada First" had orchestrated the campaign which so aroused many people of Ontario that it profoundly affected government policy where the new province of Manitoba was concerned.⁶²

Denison was careful to give the names of the men with whom he worked, so we even have the names of the men who formed what we may call the jury which found Riel guilty of "murder": Captain James Bennett, Dr. William Canniff, G.T. Denison, James D. Edgar, Andrew Fleming, W.A. Foster, Richard Grahame, George Kingsmill, Joseph E. McDougall, T.H. O'Neil, George M. Rae, Hugh Scott, Thomas Walmsley.⁶³

Denison did not record either those who had testified against Riel or spoken in his defense.

¹ There is a good discussion of what historians had to say about this event before 1925 in A.H. de Trémandan, "The Execution of Thomas Scott", in Canadian Historical Review, Vol. VI, No. 3, Sept. 1925. W.L. Morton, in his introduction to Begg's Journal, gives one interpretation of this event. G.F.G. Stanley's Louis Riel has a chapter, No. 6 on it.

² Correspondence of writer with qualified genealogist Patrick Smyth-Wood dated Oct. 22, 1985, Jan. 9, 1986, March 28, 1986, and May 3, 1986. Letters are in the possession of the writer.

³ Gerald E. Boyce, Historic Hostings, 182.

⁴ Ibid; Stanley, Louis Riel, 111.

⁵ Rev. George Young, Manitoba Memories, 143.

⁶ Department of National Defence, Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army, 146.

⁷ PAC R.G.9, CI, Volume 229, Docket 758; RG9, IIF6, Vol. 122.

⁸ PAC R.G.9 IIF6, Vol. 122; RG9 IC6 Vols. 18-20; RG9 IIB4, Vol. 4.

⁹ Woodington's Journal, 49.

- ¹⁰ The Nor'Wester, June 26, 1869.
- ¹¹ Begg, The Creation of Manitoba, 79-80; PAM General Quarterly Court, Nov. 18, 1869, where the name "Thomas Scott" is used.
- ¹² See Ross's notebook in Begg's Journal, 440.
- ¹³ Manitoba News-Letter, Feb. 1, 1871.
- ¹⁴ Saskatchewan Archives, Diary of P.G. Laurie, 32, 46.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Saskatchewan Archives, George Young, Historical Paper No. 1, 13.
- ¹⁷ Begg's Journal, 228.
- ¹⁸ Woodington's Journal, 48.
- ¹⁹ St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 2, 1870, article by "R. McC."
- ²⁰ Begg's Journal, 314, 315.
- ²¹ Begg's Journal, 316; Boulton, Reminiscences, 117.
- ²² C.S.P., 1870(12): Report of Commissioner D.A. Smith, 6.
- ²³ Begg's Journal, 316-7.
- ²⁴ Begg's Journal, 337.
- ²⁵ "The 'Memories' of George William Sanderson, 1846-1936", 130.
- ²⁶ Le Courrier de St. Hyacinthe, 2 avril (Fort Garry, 6 mars), 1870.
- ²⁷ Sanderson's "Memories", 131.
- ²⁸ Sanderson's "Memories", 129.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Begg's Journal, 326.
- ³¹ Sanderson's "Memories", 128-29.
- ³² Sanderson's "Memories", 128; Boulton's Reminiscences, 113.
- ³³ Sanderson's "Memories", 129.
- ³⁴ Sanderson's "Memories", 131.
- ³⁵ Sanderson's "Memories", 129.
- ³⁶ A.H. de Trémandan, "The Execution of Thomas Scott", in Canadian Historical Review, Vol. VI, No. 3, Sept. 1925, 230-1.
- ³⁷ Begg's Journal, 326; Rev. George Young's account in Daily Telegraph, Sept. 22 (Fort Garry, Sept. 4), 1870.
- ³⁸ Sanderson's "Memories", 130.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Sanderson's "Memories", 131.
- ⁴¹ Begg's Journal, 327.
- ⁴² Begg's Journal, 324-5; 327.
- ⁴³ Begg's Journal, 327.
- ⁴⁴ "Mémorial by Louis Riel on the Course and Purpose of the Red River Resistance", Begg's Journal, 541-2; Begg's Journal, 162, 265, 270, 312-3; Sanderson's "Memories", 131.
- ⁴⁵ Begg's Journal, 542.
- ⁴⁶ Dugas, Histoire Vécridique, 168.
- ⁴⁷ A.H. de Trémandan, *op. cit.*, 231 (footnote).
- ⁴⁸ Preliminary Investigation and Trial of Ambroise Lépine for the Murder of Thomas Scott, 120-1; see also "The Lépine Trial Continued" in the Manitoba Daily Free Press, Oct. 30, 1874.
- ⁴⁹ Le Courrier de St. Hyacinthe, 2 avril (Fort Garry, 6 mars), 1870. The Globe published a translation on April 6, 1870.
- ⁵⁰ W.L. Morton (ed.) Birth, Smith's Report, 41.
- ⁵¹ The New Nation, March 4, 1870.
- ⁵² Begg's Journal, 327-8.
- ⁵³ André Nault, quoted in E.B. Osler, The Man Who Had to Hang - Louis Riel, 110-1.
- ⁵⁴ Sanderson's "Memories", 131.
- ⁵⁵ Begg's Journal, 328; The New Nation, March 4, 1870.
- ⁵⁶ Begg's Journal, 329.
- ⁵⁷ A.G. Morice, A Critical History of the Red River Insurrection, 294-5.
- ⁵⁸ Denison, Struggle, 27.
- ⁵⁹ Denison, Struggle, 25 ff.

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- ⁶⁰ See especially the Telegraph and the Globe for April, 1870.
- ⁶¹ Denison, Struggle, 29; PAC MG24 B29 Vol. 9, Howe to Archibald, Nov. 4, 1871.
- ⁶² Denison, Struggle, chapters 3, 4 and 5.
- ⁶³ Denison, Struggle, 19, 20, 26, 27.