

## The Negotiations

There were, in effect, several sets of delegates in Ontario in the spring of 1870, some official, some not. The representations which they made put their mark on Manitoba as an unforgiven "colony of a colony."<sup>1</sup> It is appropriate to deal first with those who arrived first.

Accounts of Schultz's arrival in St. Paul on March 31 were published in the newspapers,<sup>2</sup> and the "Canada First" committee set about arranging a reception for them in Toronto.<sup>3</sup> G.T. Denison has told how there was so little general interest at the time in the fate of the Canadians at Red River that the first meeting was held in private, "so much did we dread the indifference of the public and the danger of our efforts being a failure". The committee saw that a carefully contrived campaign would be necessary to arouse the Ontario public. Denison described this campaign fully. He told how his own speech moved this private meeting to the point where a request was made to the mayor for a public meeting, and how from April 2 to April 6 the committee worked to urge its friends to attend the meeting.<sup>4</sup>

A key person in this was Captain James Bennett, district master of the Toronto Orange lodges and a member of "Canada First".<sup>5</sup> There were seventeen Orange lodges in Toronto in 1870, with a number of "Young Briton" affiliates.<sup>6</sup> In his position of district master Bennett could communicate with them easily, and assuring attendance at a meeting or demonstration was just a question of sufficient time to get the word around. Four days did the trick. When Schultz, Monkman, Lynch and Drever arrived on April 6 one thousand people met them at the station. The meeting itself was to have been held in St. Lawrence Hall, but the crowd was so large that the Market Square was used instead, the speakers standing on the roof of the porch of the old City Hall. The inflammatory editorials of the Daily Telegraph had had their effect.<sup>7</sup> They had been written by W.A. Foster of "Canada First" and published with the approval of editor George

Kingsmill, also of "Canada First". Resolutions adopted at the meeting urged the government to send an expeditionary force to Red River and to refuse to receive the "emissaries of those who have robbed, imprisoned and murdered loyal Canadians".<sup>8</sup>

Foster and Denison met with Lynch, Mair and Schultz and planned the strategy to be followed in the days that followed. Denison decided to go with the others to Ottawa to press their claims and give their advice. Dr. Canniff and others sent word to friends at Cobourg, Belleville and Prescott to organize demonstrations of welcome at the various points along their route to the capital. Throughout Ontario committees planned "indignation meetings" and passed resolutions.<sup>9</sup> Ottawa was soon inundated with these resolutions.

In Ottawa Denison went to see Sir John A. Macdonald and urged him not to receive the Red River delegates at all. When Macdonald replied that he would have to receive them Denison told him that from the day he received Ritchot and Scott he could consider Denison as a strong and vigorous opponent.<sup>10</sup>

"Much disheartened", Denison reported this to Lynch and Schultz, and they decided that Lynch should put their case before the Governor General.<sup>11</sup> Denison later claimed to have drafted the protest which Lynch wrote out and signed on April 12, the day Ritchot and Scott, two of the Red River delegates, were first received by Cartier. Copies of this protest were sent to the press and widely published.<sup>12</sup> Sir John Young asked Lynch to come and see him, and a "lengthy interview" followed.<sup>13</sup>

Lynch claimed to represent the "loyal inhabitants of Red River both native and Canadian", when actually he represented only the men who were made prisoners in the Schultz houses incident.<sup>14</sup> Ritchot and Scott should not be accepted as delegates, he argued, as they

"were present at the time of the murder" of Thomas Scott and were "simply the delegates of an armed minority".<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile the Red River delegates had been travelling to Ottawa. They had intended to use the most direct route through western Ontario and Toronto. However, in St. Paul they heard of the excitement in Ontario and learned that an effort would be made to arrest or molest them when they reached Canadian territory. They sent a wire to Macdonald asking for advice and received the answer "Avoid Ontario and come by Buffalo".<sup>15</sup> This they did, and they reached Ogdensburg on April 11. There they were met by Gilbert McMicken, who had been sent to escort them to Ottawa. However, nothing turned out as planned. No sooner had they been received by Howe and Cartier than rumors circulated that Ritchot and Scott were to be arrested. Scott was, in fact, arrested that evening. The next day some friends accompanied Ritchot to the court house, where a warrant was served on him. Denison later described how "Canada First" had Ritchot and Scott arrested and rearrested in a kind of game that went on for a number of days.<sup>17</sup> Not until April 23 were they finally set at liberty on the grounds of insufficient evidence.<sup>18</sup> Judge Black, whom "Canada First" referred to as the "loyal" delegate, was never arrested.

Ritchot believed that the Red River delegates were entitled to some form of diplomatic immunity, since they had come at the Canadian government's invitation to negotiate. He expressed this belief in a letter dated April 20 and addressed to Sir John Young.<sup>19</sup> This protest seems to have had no result.

Quite different was the treatment accorded several other "persons recently from Red River". These persons were asked to give evidence before a Select Committee of the Senate. Hearings began on April 14, when J.J. Setter gave evidence. Joseph Monkman, Schultz's

associate, was heard April 14 and 16. The Rev. William Fletcher, a Scot who had been in Rupert's Land only 18 months, completed the work of April 16. On April 18 the Committee heard from Donald Codd, Dr. James Lynch and Arthur Hamilton. All three had gone to Red River in 1869. Major Boulton testified on April 19 as did John C. Schultz. Charles Garratt, a resident of Red River for 11 years, gave evidence on April 21 and 22. Charles Mair was heard on April 25, when the Select Committee wound up its hearings.<sup>20</sup> Judge Black was asked to give evidence, but declined to do so.

John C. Schultz had errands to do in Montreal. Creditors there were pressing for payment of accounts unpaid since long before the Insurrection.<sup>21</sup> Schultz had no money for them yet, but was beginning to see his way clear to receiving compensation for his losses in the Insurrection. Before he could make any claim in Ottawa he needed some kind of documentation from his creditors, since he had no way of knowing exactly what his losses were.<sup>22</sup> Then there was a suggestion of Cartier's which he wanted to follow up. Through Cartier he was made acquainted with Henry Starnes, a prominent member of the Montreal business community.<sup>23</sup> Starnes arranged through Sir Howard Crauford Elphinstone<sup>24</sup> for Schultz's presentation to Prince Arthur, Queen Victoria's seventh child and third son, then visiting Canada. With the acclaim of the province of Ontario filling the newspapers and his presentation to the Queen's son capping the climax Schultz was becoming something of an imperial figure, and when he requested letters from his creditors there was no difficulty, and he was able to return to Ottawa with the best of recommendations. There was also the question of getting some kind of advance payment to take care of the expenses of Lynch and Mair and others who would want to return to Red River.<sup>25</sup> April 19 found Schultz back in Ottawa giving evidence before the Select Committee.<sup>26</sup>

In Montreal again Schultz called on Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been sent to Canada to meet the Red River delegates and, if necessary, to help restore order at Red River. Schultz expressed his suspicion that the Hudson's Bay Company officers had assisted in the Métis movement, but he gave no specific information.<sup>27</sup> He returned to Ottawa on April 25.

April 25 was the day that Cartier and Macdonald began to negotiate with the Red River delegates. We can learn much about these negotiations and the atmosphere surrounding them from the journal which Father Ritchot kept.<sup>28</sup> The fate of the Red River delegates had become a "cause célèbre" in the province's newspapers, and many people in Ottawa expressed their sympathy with the men who had come so far to negotiate. When Ritchot and Scott were freed on April 23 they found a

great crowd of French-Canadians at the door and a great many Irishmen, a very great number of members of Parliament and the leading citizens of the city. All congratulate us, cheering and wishing to demonstrate.<sup>29</sup>

Ritchot asked the crowd not to demonstrate in any way, and the people quietly followed him to the Bishop's Palace. It was obvious that it was unwise to have the delegates come to a public place, so negotiations were held at Cartier's residence at the corner of Maria and Metcalfe streets (now the corner of Laurier Avenue West and Metcalfe).<sup>30</sup>

By April 25 Ritchot had nearly reached the end of his patience, and more than once, he said, he had barely been able to contain his indignation. He said that they had been kept waiting for two weeks without receiving an official acknowledgment of any kind. He reminded Cartier of things which had been said when they first met on April 12. Ritchot had said that he was "ready to do everything that would help the government" provided that it was not harmful to the success of the delegates' mission. He paused and asked Cartier if that was not a true summary of what had been said, and if Ritchot had not behaved as he had said he would. Cartier had to agree

that it was a true summary, and that Ritchot had so behaved. Ritchot then said that he was not prepared to open negotiations until he knew where the delegates stood officially. Cartier replied that the delegates were officially recognized in that, on the 12<sup>th</sup>, he had come to welcome them in the name of his colleagues, and that he and Macdonald were delegates of the ministry sent to hear them. It was only when Ritchot insisted on something in writing that Cartier promised that a written statement of their status would be made.<sup>31</sup>

At that point Ritchot began negotiations by saying that a general amnesty was a *sine qua non* of any settlement. And there in his journal Ritchot made a very significant entry: "I had made our observations on the dispatch of troops."<sup>32</sup>

On April 25 it was general knowledge that there was to be a Red River Expeditionary Force. Preparations for it had been proceeding quietly since the preceding November, but only in April with the agitation begun by "Canada First" did a general discussion of the matter begin. Public opinion was by no means unanimous on the desirability of such an expedition, even in Ontario, and much of Quebec was solidly against it, it being recognized there that an expedition could only be viewed as punitive. As of April 25, when negotiations began, Ritchot knew that troops would soon be on the way to Red River. It was obvious that negotiations would go forward with a gun pointed at the delegates. Ritchot and the other delegates saw it: Cartier and Macdonald had evidently discussed the matter with associates. There is light on this in a letter written by Colonel Wolseley to his brother Dick on April 6, just a day after Wolseley had learned of his appointment as commanding officer of that force:

The government is anxious that everything should be done quietly for as they expect some vagabond delegates from Mr. Riel's government to go to Ottawa they do not wish it to appear that they are preparing for war whilst they are professing to treat amicably.<sup>33</sup>

On April 25 that very state of affairs existed. This explains a number of things about the negotiations which are otherwise difficult to explain. And through the entries in Ritchot's journal we can learn that what the Canadian Cabinet saw as most important in the entire Red River affair was federal control of the lands of the North-West. Ritchot learned this with dramatic suddenness on April 27. If the delegates' sine qua non was an amnesty the sine qua non of the Cabinet was Dominion control of the lands of the North-West.<sup>34</sup>

It was soon revealed that the government had intended to create a territory with an interim government "to organize matters". Judge Black was prepared to accept this. Ritchot and Scott were not, and their insistence on the point forced Cartier and Macdonald to agree to "a responsible government composed of two chambers". This sounded a little like a provincial government, and Ritchot and Scott may have thought that they were on their way to a successful conclusion when they scored success here.<sup>35</sup> They were soon to find out otherwise. The annoyance and impatience which showed through Ritchot's journal entries for earlier days turned to mystification on April 27. He had studied the British North America Act, and knew that in asking for provincial control of their own lands the people of Red River were only asking for what the people of the four Canadian provinces already had.<sup>36</sup> He may also have known that local control of lands and resources was a basic principle of administration throughout the British Empire. It is certain that he had seen and discussed the "memorandum" which de Salaberry and Thibault had brought with them when they came to Red River as special commissioners, a document he had also discussed with Sir Charles Tupper.<sup>37</sup> In this document "members of the Canadian government" had answered what appeared to be the complaints which the people of Red River were making in their resistance to Canadian methods in bringing about the transfer. Point five contained the statement that "under Confederation each province has the control of

public lands and all monies arising from the sale of Crown Lands, mines, minerals, etc. etc. In the United States the Federal Government takes all the money obtained by the sale of public lands".

What had changed between midwinter and spring? Why were Cartier and Macdonald now presenting the delegates with the draft of a bill which stipulated that the Dominion should have "control of the lands"? To add to Ritchot's mystification was the fact that Judge Black took sides with Macdonald and Cartier on this point. Some notion of the tone of the discussion may be gained by reading Ritchot's journal entry concerning this:

... that as far as I was concerned I neither could nor wished to charge myself with getting accepted those offers made by the ministers and accepted by Mr. Black, that if that gentleman wished and could get them accepted by the people, I would accept them willingly. Mr. Black said frankly that he could not get those arrangements accepted.<sup>38</sup>

Ritchot knew his people and he knew what the British North America Act stated. What Cartier and Macdonald were proposing was, if not illegal, certainly not in accord with the British North America Act. And he had in his hands the draft of a bill! Negotiations had gone on for only two days; they had hit upon a very controversial matter and, yet, they had a draft of a bill in their hands!

Then the ministers asked us what we wished to do in the matter of the lands. Reply, the control of those lands as requested in our instructions. Impossible, said the ministers.<sup>39</sup>

Ritchot's next paragraph reads as follows:

We could by no means let go control of the lands unless we had compensation or conditions which FOR THE PRESENT POPULATION WOULD BE THE EQUIVALENT OF THE CONTROL OF THE LANDS [emphasis mine] of their province.<sup>40</sup>

Here Ritchot described the crossing of a very important Rubicon. In Canadian history it marks the break with British colonial precedent, signalling the end of the Canadian federal system as originally designed, and the beginning of a revolutionary change which would make the Canadian government more of an imperial power than a federal power. For Ritchot its acceptance caused him a personal crisis, which meant that he must descend from a discussion of principles and haggle like a customer in an Algerian market for the setting aside of enough land to meet the immediate needs of the mixed-blood people in Red River. In a few hours of bargaining he must decide something for which he had no instructions or preparation and do it according to a principle which he feared was illegal. His distaste for the process is apparent in the journal entries. The figure arrived at on May 2 was 1,500,000 acres, and an understanding agreed upon that day was that the distribution of these lands should be carried out under the supervision of the local legislature and under legislation ensuring "the continuance of these lands in the Métis families".<sup>41</sup>

How was Ritchot's assent to the radical changes gained? We have seen that Judge Black, when pressed, was forced to admit that the people of Red River would not wish to accept the loss of control of their lands. Yet Ritchot and Scott finally decided to compromise on the land issue. Why? It would be pleasant to suggest that there was only one answer: that they had already been given assurances on a matter which was considered to be of even greater importance and was their *sine qua non*. That was the granting of an amnesty, which had been dealt with on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Cartier and Macdonald had begun by saying that the matter was not "within their competence", but when told that "any arrangement would be useless without the arrangement embodied in that clause" – clause 19 of their instructions which asked for a general amnesty as a "*sine qua non*" – they changed their minds. They "told us", Ritchot recorded, "that they would undertake to get

the matter settled and that it was easy."<sup>42</sup> There is no doubt that this promise was made and at this time – April 26. There is no doubt, too, that Alfred Scott, whose maternal language was English, understood the promise to have been made just as much as Ritchot, whose maternal language was French. In a conversation with J.W. Taylor on May 1 Scott stated that the "civil amnesty would be full and proceed from Canada: while the Imperial Government would assume the responsibility of a pardon for criminal offences...."<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, in a letter to Sir John Young dated June 30, Sir George Cartier told the Governor General that the delegates

relied upon these explanations and forthwith entered upon the negotiations which resulted in the passing of the Act relating to the Government of the Province of Manitoba.

"Without these explanations," Cartier went on,

it is more than probable that they would not have felt themselves justified in negotiating.<sup>44</sup>

This is somewhat of an understatement. Ritchot testified under oath in 1874 to the Select Committee of the House of Commons that he had told Cartier and Macdonald that he would leave for Red River the following morning if they did not have the power to give an undertaking concerning the amnesty.<sup>45</sup> They said they would reply the next day. On the 26<sup>th</sup> the ministers said "that they would undertake to get the matter settled and that it was easy...." The amnesty was never issued, of course, and the reasons for that form a story which must be told in the appropriate place.

However, it is likely that there was a second reason for the decision to compromise on the land issue, a reason less pleasant to think about – the gun which was pointed at the Red River delegates. The discussions concerning land were long drawn out, taking more time than any other topic discussed. Ritchot and Scott were still agonizing over it on May 5 and May 6. At the end of Ritchot's journal entry for May 6 appear these words:

We know that England and Canada can destroy our population, but it is not a question of that. It is a matter of settling affairs peacefully and we can do that.<sup>46</sup>

By May 6 the Globe and Telegraph were reporting the enlistments for service in the Red River Expeditionary Force. No one reading these newspapers could fail to conclude that many influential people in Ontario meant this force to be punitive, no matter what Canada's leaders might be saying. These thoughts were very much on Ritchot's mind on May 6 and he came back to them the very next day in a conversation with Jean D. Brosseau, member of Parliament for Portneuf. Brosseau had written to a Quebec newspaper stating that Ritchot and Scott did not disapprove of the sending of "troops" to Red River. Ritchot had to rebuke Brosseau for making this statement.<sup>47</sup> Ritchot knew that the last thing Red River needed was a force of hostile and poorly-trained young men. And yet, while he was negotiating, such a force was rapidly coming into being. It was important to bring negotiations to a close as soon as possible.

Having decided to compromise on the question of the control of the lands Ritchot and Scott found that they had entered on a slippery slope at the bottom of which were nothing but broken promises and regrets. On May 5 they found themselves studying a revised version of the Bill which "displeased" Ritchot "fundamentally". The figure of 1,500,000 acres earlier agreed upon was now 1,400,000, and there was no trace of the "understanding" concerning a committee to oversee the distribution of these 1,400,000 acres set aside for the children of the mixed-blood people.<sup>48</sup> Ritchot and Scott complained to Cartier and Macdonald about this, and received the promise that they would issue an order-in-council giving "assurance of the carrying out of our verbal understandings".<sup>49</sup> The Bill was before the House, the ministers said, and it would be difficult enough to get it passed without introducing changes at this time. Ritchot and Scott were still opposed to the manner in which things were being done and said so. The two ministers then

promised an order-in-council naming the persons who would form a committee "charged with choosing and dividing" the 1,400,000 acres in the Act-to-be. Ritchot was still unhappy about it. He consulted with several friends and convinced himself that he could accept this.<sup>50</sup>

This was on May 5. On May 18 Ritchot wrote to Cartier stating the substance of the complaints and observations of the delegates with regard to the negotiations (see Appendix "A"). On May 19, when Ritchot again spoke with Young and Cartier about the land question, Macdonald was very ill and Cartier was carrying the responsibilities of government alone. Sir John Young authorized Cartier to give Ritchot in writing the promise made to put in practice "what had been promised on the subject of lands."<sup>51</sup> Nothing was done until May 23. Ritchot then met Cartier in his office and Cartier showed him the rough draft.<sup>52</sup> On May 27 Cartier gave Ritchot the result of his efforts. Ritchot was not satisfied. He handed it back "to get him to add some guarantees on the subject of the 31<sup>st</sup> clause of the Manitoba Act regarding the choice and division of lands that were to be distributed to the children." Cartier promised to "see to it".<sup>53</sup> The result was the letter which is known to history as Cartier's letter of May 23, 1870, whose text (see Appendix "B") is to be found in the "Report of the Select Committee of 1874" along with Ritchot's deposition. We shall hear more of this letter in due course. On May 28 Cartier read the final draft to Ritchot who accepted it as satisfactory.<sup>54</sup> Cartier had it written out in good form and J.-C. Taché, a civil servant, sent it to Ritchot. Ritchot noted in his journal that same day that the "Fenians" were withdrawing. During these last days of May Cartier's department had been busy with arrangements for the Red River Expeditionary Force while at the same time directing the defense against the Fenians. It was a busy time for Cartier, since Macdonald was still very ill.

While following the negotiations with the Red River delegates we have neglected for a time the other very important – and influential – delegates then in Ottawa. It is time now to return to these men and find out how the Manitoba Act, with its revolutionary clauses, was passed in such a short time.

During their negotiations on the Manitoba bill Cartier and Macdonald had repeatedly expressed to the Red River delegates their concern about the difficulty of getting it passed. This concern was firmly based in the realities of the situation, but the difficulties were not where the Red River delegates were led to believe they were.

The three Red River delegates were given the "draft of a bill" on May 2.<sup>55</sup> They did not know that the same draft was also given to Lynch, Mair, Schultz and the others who had come from Red River to press their claims. They did not know that a meeting of these men was held in which they "unanimously agreed to oppose the act tooth and nail, Dr. Schultz appearing to be its most bitter opponent".<sup>56</sup> There were probably a number of reasons for the opposition of these men to the bill then before the House. First, of course, was the same objection that Ritchot and Scott had made – the B.N.A. Act gave control of lands to the provinces. Another which received publicity at the time was that Portage la Prairie had been left out of the province-to-be. The Red River delegates were asked about this on May 3 and expressed no opposition to the inclusion of that community in the new province. Reference to this matter may be found in the Commons Debates, in Ritchot's journal and in other documents.<sup>57</sup> It was Schultz's opposition, however, which frightened the Canadian cabinet ministers into immediate and decisive action. If Schultz's opposition became common knowledge it was entirely possible that action on the bill would be held up. The bill could even be defeated if it became known in enough Ontario ridings that "Schultz of Red River" was against it. A remedy for this was found swiftly and in time. Schultz

"agreed to receive \$11,000 on account of the \$70,000 he had asked for compensation".<sup>58</sup> The details of the deal leaked out in the following months, but it was not until February of 1871 that Sir Francis Hincks told the story to the House of Commons:

When the Manitoba Bill was before the House a number of refugees were very strongly pressing their claims. He referred more particularly to Dr. Schultz. That gentleman was extensively engaged in business in that province, and he represented the utter ruin in which he had been involved by this insurrection. He (Dr. Schultz) had submitted a paper to him (Sir F. Hincks) which was signed by Dr. Schultz's creditors which amounted to \$70,000, which might not be considered a very reasonable sum by many people.

Sir Francis had taken considerable trouble to look into Schultz's claims, and had ascertained that the Government was determined to honor those claims and the claims of the other "refugees". Then Sir Francis

had taken the personal responsibility of giving Dr. Schultz an advance on his claim sufficient to enable him to obtain goods from his creditors at Montreal and he also advanced \$300 to Dr. Lynch. He had done this believing that the sentiment of the House was in favor of giving these men compensation (Hear, hear)...

Mr. Mackenzie asked what had been paid to Schultz and others. Sir Francis said that \$11,000 had been advanced to Schultz's creditors and \$500 to miscellaneous refugees. Mr. Blake asked when the money had been paid. Sir Francis replied that the money

was never paid by the Government. I alone am personally responsible for it to the Bank of Montreal (Hear, hear).<sup>59</sup>

Schultz's change of position on the Manitoba Act caused annoyance and anger among his fellow "refugees". Immediately after the passing of the Act Charles Mair wrote to Schultz from Lanark, Ontario:

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 or myself. I refer to Portage la Prairie.

Mair did not seem to know at that time that there had been a financial deal. His annoyance seems to have been caused by the fact that he had been "cast" "in the shade" while Lynch and Schultz had been able to "stand in the foreground". If there was any repetition of this sort of thing, Mair warned, he would be

compelled to deal in self-defence with the history of transactions since Den[n]is's 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.<sup>60</sup>

With the Manitoba Act safely passed we should now look at what happened to the promise of an amnesty. After all, an amnesty was first suggested by the "general council for the force" at Kildonan in February,<sup>61</sup> and was the sine qua non of the Red River delegates.

The matter was not mentioned again until April 30, when the delegates met with Cartier alone, Macdonald being absent. These discussions gave Alfred Scott the impression that there would be not one but two amnesties.

On May 3 they had an audience with the Governor General, Sir John Young. Also present was Sir Clinton Murdoch, who represented the British government. Young told the delegates that in his proclamation of December 6, 1869, he had promised that

no one of those who had taken part in that unfortunate violation of the laws would be troubled, that in effect there would be a general proclamation of amnesty, that Her Majesty asked nothing more than to reestablish peace in the Dominions, that Sir Clinton Murdoch, special representative of Her Majesty to help settle the difficult question, knew fully the intention of Her Majesty on that subject.<sup>62</sup>

Sir Clinton Murdoch added that Her Majesty's government wished to "pass the sponge" over all the "facts and illegal acts which had taken place".<sup>63</sup> Ritchot said that he had nothing in

writing on this point. Murdoch replied that in dealing with public men such as Macdonald and Cartier "it was not necessary to dot all the i's, that they must have a certain latitude, that it would be more advantageous for us to have it so, etc.". Ritchot observed that "the people would not be satisfied without having some assurances on the subject". He knew that in a few days the people at Red River would be reading about the frenzy to enlist in the Expeditionary Force being reported daily by the Globe and the Telegraph. Young then said that "everything would go well, that the settlers of the North-West could be reassured, that no one would be troubled."<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately Ritchot's journal and the sworn testimony of himself and Archbishop Taché in the Report of the Select Committee of 1874 are the only sources for the conversation recorded here.<sup>65</sup> While Young and Murdoch later stated that an amnesty was never promised – thus implying that Ritchot had lied – we have to entertain serious doubts about their truthfulness. The dedication with which Ritchot did his duties as a delegate, the care with which he recorded events and conversations in his journal and the frequency with which his entries can be verified by reference to other documents remove doubt, in my opinion, that Ritchot told the truth and suggest rather that the other gentlemen did not.<sup>66</sup>

Days passed. The Manitoba bill was debated and passed. Parliament was prorogued. The newspapers reported the drilling of troops at the Crystal Palace in Toronto and the general enthusiasm of those watching them. Ontario was not in the mood for granting amnesties to "rebels". Still there was no news for Ritchot about an amnesty. On May 17 at a dinner at Cartier's Ritchot spoke to Sir George about it, and received the answer that they would see the Governor General on May 19. Accordingly on May 19 Ritchot and Scott made their way with Cartier to Rideau Hall to meet with Sir John Young.<sup>67</sup> Judge Black had left for Montreal, not considering the amnesty to be part of his business.<sup>68</sup> Ritchot reminded Young that his ministers

had promised the proclamation of an amnesty and that he himself had been pleased to guarantee the granting of it. Young again showed the delegates his proclamation of December 6, saying that it had not been revoked and, consequently, it would be effective.<sup>69</sup> Ritchot reminded the Governor General that he, Ritchot, had never been ready to accept that proclamation as sufficient to satisfy the Red River people – more than one tragic event had happened after December 6. Since a promise of amnesty had been made it was necessary to have something more satisfactory. Young replied that such a proclamation could not long be delayed, but he could not issue it immediately as it had to come from England. Ritchot could feel his gorge rising, but fought for self-control and soldiered on. He reminded Young that there was a telegraphic cable to England and that it was easy to communicate with the authorities there.<sup>70</sup> Young replied that such matters were not conducted by cable. The amnesty must be signed in Her Majesty's own hand. He said it would be issued immediately and would arrive in Manitoba before Ritchot. Ritchot replied that it would be impossible for it to arrive there before him and Scott. Young replied that in any event it would arrive there before the Lieutenant-governor. Ritchot then insisted that he could not leave without some written guarantee that the amnesty would be granted. Young said that the next day he would send Ritchot a document giving written assurance of an amnesty. He said that he was authorized to do so by virtue of a wholly special commission, because at that moment he had no jurisdiction in the North-West.<sup>71</sup> Young then returned to his proclamation of December 6, saying that it was the best possible guarantee and that there was nothing to be feared.

Earlier in this conversation Young had urged Ritchot to leave for Manitoba immediately. The troops were going there, he said, and trouble might occur.<sup>72</sup> If Ritchot had had his misgivings before this he certainly had more of them after Young's urgings. If the troops were

going to Manitoba on an "errand of peace", as Young had said in his speech proroguing Parliament, why was Ritchot's presence in Manitoba so greatly to be desired? Ritchot did not know what to think of this, but he had his fears, and it was with a heavy heart that he "accepted the assurances and explanations and left."

Ritchot received no "document". Indeed, it is to be doubted whether by this time he really expected to receive one. Certainly, as he later testified, "nothing particular was done" on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. On May 23 Ritchot went to Sir George and complained that he had not received the "document" he was expecting from the Governor General. He found Sir George writing the letter mentioned above, the letter known to history as Cartier's letter of May 23, 1870. As we have seen, Ritchot insisted on several additions to it.<sup>73</sup> Then he brought up the matter of the "document" which he had been promised and had not received. They talked of many things: of the route to be followed by the Lieutenant-governor on his way to Manitoba and of his lodgings once arrived there. They spoke of the provisioning of the troops in Manitoba and of what had happened to Schultz's property.<sup>74</sup> But Ritchot again had to wait for an answer to his question about the "document". The reply was not at all to his liking. The next day he was informed by the Governor General through Cartier that Ritchot should forward a petition to the Queen asking for an amnesty and that the Governor General would support it. Ritchot refused at first, no doubt thinking that such a preliminary step would have been taken long since, but relented when assured that it was only a "matter of form". Ritchot set to work on the petition and was assisted in this by Mr. J.-C. Taché. When this petition was put in its final form on May 26 the influence of Ritchot in it was very prominent. Where the delegates' instruction No. 19 limited itself to the debts contracted by the Provisional Government and to the responsibility of "members of the Provisional Government" with "regard to the movement, or any of the actions

which led to the present negotiations", the petition prepared by Ritchot and Taché took a broader and more statesmanlike view of events and asked forgiveness for all illegal acts that may have been committed during the time of the disturbances. Once issued, it could have changed the course of Manitoba's history.<sup>75</sup> Ritchot signed on behalf of himself and the other two delegates, both of whom had left Ottawa by May 26 when the petition was signed. With that Ritchot had to be satisfied. He left for Red River at the beginning of June.

Since no amnesty was ever issued in the period covered by this book the facts explaining that may profitably be revealed at this point. Not long after Ritchot's departure Sir George Cartier set to work preparing a memorandum on the subject of the Red River Insurrection. When published in the "Report of the Select Committee of 1874" this memorandum filled nearly eight pages.<sup>76</sup> Cartier's secretary George Futvoye testified that he typed this memorandum at Sir George's dictation in an effort which required "eight or ten" evenings.<sup>77</sup> It contained a careful and fair-minded analysis of the events at Red River in 1869 and 1870 up to and including the execution of Thomas Scott. It made the point that Riel and associates, if indicted and tried before a jury of their peers at Red River, or even in England, could not be found guilty either of illegal acts or of the murder of Scott. Since this was true, Cartier argued, it would be advisable to except no one from a general amnesty, and this was his recommendation.

The memorandum was handed to the Governor General for transmission to the Colonial Office in London. Sir John Young prepared an accompanying note pointing out that Cartier's memorandum was "entitled to all the consideration due to the writer's long experience and high political standing in British North America, but [was] not to be regarded as a Minute of Council nor as the expression of the opinion of the united Cabinet".<sup>78</sup>

In the same set of files with Ritchot's petition and Cartier's memorandum is to be found a letter on the subject of an amnesty, a letter written by the same James Spencer Lynch who wrote the protest about the reception of the Red River delegates. Lynch wrote his letter on July 1, and in it he stated reasons why an amnesty which included Riel, O'Donoghue and Lépine should not be issued. "An amnesty" argued Lynch, "would be injudicious, impolitic and dangerous" if it included these leaders. Those "who have seen their comrade and fellow prisoner led out and butchered in cold blood" might "in that wild spirit of justice called vengeance take the life of Riel or some other of the leaders". In forwarding this letter Sir John Young said simply that he was forwarding a "communication which I have received from Dr. James Lynch stating certain reasons which make it, in his opinion, inexpedient to proclaim a general amnesty in favor of all connected with the recent disturbances at Red River".<sup>79</sup>

Young did not identify Lynch in any way or make any comment concerning the weight which was to be attached to his letter in considering the matter of an amnesty, as he had done with Cartier's memorandum.<sup>80</sup> He thus made of it a document which effectively cancelled out both a petition from a bona fide Red River delegate and a memorandum prepared by a man who had been for some time acting prime minister.

There need be no mystery about why an amnesty was not issued.

## Appendix "A"

Ritchot's letter to Cartier of May 18, 1870.

"Sir-

We had agreed, as you know, to leave the choice and the division of the lands to be divided among the children of the Half-breeds to the local legislature, you judged it fitting, for good reasons I do not doubt, to replace this mode of division by the 27<sup>th</sup> clause which leaves this choice and this division to the Governor in Council.

Upon our complaints and observations, Sir John and you promised to have authorized by the Governor in Council before our departure, a committee made up of men whom we will propose to you ourselves, to choose these lands and make the division of them to the children of the Half-breeds. Sir John proposed to name Monseigneur Taché as one of the members of the committee. In this case the Bishop of Rupert's Land could also be chosen with some other citizens to form this committee.

I hope you will be able to arrange that before our departure.

The fourth paragraph of the 28<sup>th</sup> clause which has reference to the lands owned in the part of the province in which the titles of the Indians have not been extinguished must also be arranged before our departure.<sup>1</sup> In our arrangement these lands thus owned should also be left free to those who possess them now. Sir John and you promised that it would be so and that it was already all right with the Honorable Ministers. The measure is of the highest importance for us.

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<sup>1</sup> An explanation is needed here. There is in Volume 101 of the Macdonald Papers a working draft of the Manitoba bill, greatly underlined, crossed out and written on in the margin. In this version section 31 of the Manitoba Act as passed - the section concerning the 1,400,000 acres - is numbered 27. Section 32 - "for the quieting" - is numbered 28. When this is remembered Ritchot's letter makes perfect sense.

The questions raised by the 19<sup>th</sup> clause of our instructions, especially the amnesty, are of the highest importance.<sup>2</sup> I care to hope, Sir, and the past is my guarantee for the future, that you will be able to obtain before our departure all the guarantees promised by Sir John and you on the subject of these questions of great importance.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. N. Ritchot<sup>2</sup>

(Ritchot's letter is to be found in Volume 101 of the Macdonald Papers. The translation from the original French is mine.)

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<sup>2</sup> This reference, of course, is to the clause of the delegates' instructions which asked for an amnesty.

## Appendix "B"

Cartier's letter of May 23, 1870

Department of Militia and Defence  
May 23, 1870

Gentlemen -

Regarding the representations made by you respecting the fourth sub-section of Section 32 of the Act to establish and provide for the Government, of the Province of Manitoba in which it is stated that "all persons in peaceable possession of tracts of land at the time of the transfer to Canada in those parts of the Province in which the Indian title has not been extinguished, shall have the right of pre-emption of the same on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Governor in Council" - I am in a position to give you the assurance of the members of the Government that as soon as the Government shall be able to grant the necessary deeds, no payment will be exacted from any of the persons mentioned in that sub-section, but they will be placed on the same footing as those mentioned in the 3 preceding sub-sections.

I beg to call your attention to the interview you had with His Excellency the Governor General on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst., at which I was present, and at which His Excellency was pleased to state that the liberal policy intended to be pursued by the Government with regard to the parties for whom you interest yourselves, was the proper one, and such as ought to be adopted.

I have the honor to be,  
Gentlemen,  
Your most obedient servant  
Geo. E. Cartier  
Minister of Militia and Defence

P.S. You are at liberty to use this letter in such manner and whenever you think fit, in any explanations you may have to give in connection with the object for which you came as Delegates to the Canadian Government. -G.E.C.

## Appendix "B" (cont'd)

To M. Ritchot [sic] and Scott.

I have the honor to give you the assurance on my own part, as well as on behalf of my colleagues, with regard to the 1,400,000 acres of land reserved by the 31<sup>st</sup> section of the Manitoba Act for the benefit of the families of the Halfbreed [sic] residents, that the regulations authorised to be made from time to time by the Governor in Council respecting that reserve, will be such as to meet the wishes of the Halfbreed [sic] residents, and to secure in the most efficient and equitable manner the division of that extent of land among the children of the Halfbreed [sic] heads of families residing in Manitoba at the time of the transfer to be made to Canada.

I have the honor to be,  
Gentlemen,  
Your most obedient servant  
Geo. E. Cartier  
Minister of Militia and Defense

("Report - 1874", p. 74)

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- <sup>1</sup> Isaac Cowie used the term in Company of Adventurers, 450.  
<sup>2</sup> Telegraph, April 6, 1870.  
<sup>3</sup> Denison, The Struggle For Imperial Unity (afterwards Struggle), 22.  
<sup>4</sup> Denison, Struggle, 25.  
<sup>5</sup> Globe, Sept. 21, 1870. See also Struggle, 26.  
<sup>6</sup> C.J. Houston and W.J. Smyth, The Sash Canada Wore, 49.  
<sup>7</sup> Denison, Struggle, 22.  
<sup>8</sup> Denison, Struggle, 26.  
<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Seaforth Expositor, April 29, 1870.  
<sup>10</sup> Denison, Struggle, 28-9.  
<sup>11</sup> Denison, Struggle, 29.  
<sup>12</sup> Globe, April 30, 1870.  
<sup>13</sup> Globe, April 28, 1870.  
<sup>14</sup> Lynch had only arrived in Red River in July of 1869, Not'Wester, July 21, 1869. He was taken prisoner on Dec. 7, Bege's Journal, 217.  
<sup>15</sup> Denison, Struggle, 30-1.  
<sup>16</sup> Telegraph, April 13, 1870.  
<sup>17</sup> Denison, Struggle, 31-2.  
<sup>18</sup> W.L. Morton (ed.), Birth of a Province (afterwards Birth) has Father N.-J. Ritchot's Journal, see page 136. The Journal may also be found edited by G.F.G. Stanley in Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française (afterwards RHAF), Vol. XVII, No. 4, Mars 1964. See page 543.  
<sup>19</sup> The letter may be seen in J.-M. Jolys, Pages de Souvenir de l'Histoire. La Paroisse de St. Pierre-Jolys au Manitoba, 38; "Correspondence...1870", Ritchot to Young, 127-8.

- <sup>20</sup> "Report of the Select Committee of the Senate on the Subject of Rupert's Land, Red River and the North-West Territory, 1870", April 14-25.
- <sup>21</sup> PAM MG12 E3 Schultz Papers, letters to Darling and Jordan, Merrick and Company, etc.
- <sup>22</sup> Canada, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1871, debate of Feb. 21, Sir Francis Hincks speaking.
- <sup>23</sup> Béllisle, Louis-Alexandre, Références Biographiques, Vol. 5, 90; Répertoires des Parlementaires Québécois, 1867-1978 (Quebec, 1980), 537.
- <sup>24</sup> Stephen and Lee (eds.), The Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XXII Supplement, 608-9.
- <sup>25</sup> Canada, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1871, debate of Feb. 20, Sir Francis Hincks speaking.
- <sup>26</sup> See note 20.
- <sup>27</sup> Birth, Northcote's Diary, 79.
- <sup>28</sup> See note 18.
- <sup>29</sup> Birth, 136; RHAF, 545.
- <sup>30</sup> Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, Map 0010731, Insurance Plan of Ottawa, Ontario, 1878. Maria Street has been known as Laurier Avenue West since about 1908. See Brian Young, George-Étienne Cartier - Montreal Bourgeois, 31.
- <sup>31</sup> Birth, 137-8; RHAF, 545.
- <sup>32</sup> Birth, 138; RHAF, 545.
- <sup>33</sup> University of Alberta, Wolseley Papers on Microfilm, Wolseley to his brother Dick, April 6, 1870.
- <sup>34</sup> Birth, 40-2; RHAF, 546-8.
- <sup>35</sup> Birth, 138-9; RHAF, 545.
- <sup>36</sup> British North America Act, 1867, section 109.
- <sup>37</sup> Hegg's Journal, 81-2; E.M. Saunders (ed.), The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., K.C.M.G., Vol. 1, 197-9.
- <sup>38</sup> Birth, 140; RHAF, 546.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Birth, 143; RHAF, 549.
- <sup>42</sup> Birth, 139; RHAF, 546.
- <sup>43</sup> Birth, 57, Taylor's letters, Taylor to Fisk, May 2, 1870. Certain historians have suggested that Ritchot's imperfect command of English may have led him to believe that an amnesty had been promised. See also Bannatyne's deposition in "Report...1874", 125.
- <sup>44</sup> PRO CO42 687 8545, Cartier to Sir John Young, June 30, 1870.
- <sup>45</sup> Ritchot had said he would "return to Red River", Report...1874", 70.
- <sup>46</sup> Birth, 148; RHAF, 553. Here there is an echo of Ritchot's conversation with Tupper. See Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., Recollections of Sixty Years in Canada, 115.
- <sup>47</sup> Birth, 148; RHAF, 554.
- <sup>48</sup> Birth, 147; RHAF, 552.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Birth, 147; RHAF, 553.
- <sup>51</sup> Birth, 154; RHAF, 558.
- <sup>52</sup> Birth, 155; RHAF, 559.
- <sup>53</sup> Birth, 156; RHAF, 560.
- <sup>54</sup> RHAF, 560. The reader should note that for some reason six sentences of Ritchot's Journal have been left out of the version published in Birth of a Province.
- <sup>55</sup> Birth, 143; RHAF, 549.
- <sup>56</sup> Supplement to the Manitohan, Feb. 25, 1871.
- <sup>57</sup> House of Commons, Debates, May 2, 1870, columns 1309, 1311, 1319; May 3, columns 1352, 1353. See also Birth, 144; Birth, Taylor to Fisk, May 5, 1870, 63-4. See also, PAM MG12 E3 Box 16/19 Schultz papers, Mair to Schultz May 10, 1870.
- <sup>58</sup> Supplement to the Manitohan, Feb. 25, 1871.
- <sup>59</sup> The Manitohan, March 11, 1871, from the Telegraph report of the February 20, 1871, debate in the House of Commons. See also Ottawa Free Press, Feb. 20, 1871; Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 21, 1871; Globe, Feb. 21, 1871.
- <sup>60</sup> PAM MG12 E3 Box 16/19, Schultz Papers, Mair to Schultz, May 10, 1870.
- <sup>61</sup> New Nation, Feb. 18, 1870.
- <sup>62</sup> Birth, 145; RHAF, 551.

<sup>63</sup> Birth, 146; RHAF, 552.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> "Report...1871" has Ritchot's deposition on the subject on page 72; Taché's on page 35.

<sup>66</sup> See for example, footnote 1 of Appendix "B" for an example of a case where a statement of Ritchot's is verified by a reference in the Macdonald papers.

<sup>67</sup> Birth, 154; RHAF, 558.

<sup>68</sup> Birth, 153; RHAF, 557.

<sup>69</sup> Birth, 154; RHAF, 558.

<sup>70</sup> "Report...1874", 73.

<sup>71</sup> Birth, 155; RHAF, 558.

<sup>72</sup> "Report...1874", 74.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Birth, 155; RHAF, 559.

<sup>75</sup> The petition is in "Report...1874", 75-6.

<sup>76</sup> "Report...1874", 171-8.

<sup>77</sup> "Report...1874", 168.

<sup>78</sup> CO 537, Supplementary Correspondence, Canada, Young to Granville, June 9, 1870.

<sup>79</sup> "Report...1874", Lynch to Young, July 1, 1870. The text is on pages 195-6. It may also be seen in Denison, Struggle, 40.

<sup>80</sup> "Report...1874", Young to Granville, July 6, 1870.

### Charles Mair and the North-West Emigration Aid Society

The same men who engineered the "indignation" meetings of April, 1870, which so aroused Ontario public opinion about the execution of Thomas Scott and the plight of the "refugees", were well represented in the council chambers of Ottawa before and during the negotiations leading to the passing of the Manitoba Act. At the same time they were planning and setting in motion what Denison in later years called an "armed emigration" similar to what had taken place in the early years of settlement of Kansas and Texas.<sup>1</sup> They were calmly planning an invasion of Manitoba.

On May 2, the very day the Manitoba bill was introduced in the House of Commons by Sir John A. Macdonald, Charles Mair was writing a letter outlining his proposal of a "party of immigrants after the German model". "None but men with some capital," Mair wrote in his letter to The Globe, "should go to the North-West at present."

Opposition will disappear with the presence of soldiery in Red River, and immigrants will have plenty of time to select land, build temporary shanties for themselves, and even to make hay, before the season closes.

Mair did not explain that immigrants would have to be squatters at first, since no land had been surveyed for settlement. He must surely have known this, especially since he was recommending for settlement "the tract of country lying from between Lake Manitoba and the Assiniboine westward along the river on both sides", an area not touched by the surveys of 1869. "To push a band of immigrants through this section of the country," Mair wrote,

it is not necessary to descend from Pembina to Fort Garry and thence ascend the Assiniboine to the point indicated. The speediest and easiest way of reaching it would be to cross the country from Pembina, or even from a point higher up, and follow the old trail directly westward to Portage la Prairie, fording Rivière Sale at the upper crossing, where the water is shallow and the bottom firm.

Mair did not suggest where the settler, after his long trip north from the end of steel in Minnesota, was to obtain supplies if he avoided Winnipeg.

By this route...Fort Garry, Red River Settlement and its insurrectionary half-breeds, and everything else, would have been entirely avoided, and people who fear – however groundless those fears may be – for their lives and property, would travel in security and in peace of mind.

The Globe published Mair's letter on May 16, less than a week after the passing of the Manitoba Act.<sup>2</sup> We cannot know how much interest in emigration to Manitoba was stimulated as a result of this letter. We do know that "Canada First" members were at work stimulating it. Schultz wrote to Denison in late May that "Mair [was] at Lanark and [was] going into our Emigration scheme which I wish you would work up with him...."<sup>3</sup> Schultz had previously informed Denison that "Garrett [sic] [was] going to lecture and get up emigration".<sup>4</sup> Denison proudly kept the letters, and they may be studied today in the Metropolitan Toronto Library.

There must have been considerable interest shown in the scheme because by July 19 Mair was able to advertise in The Globe that he was "forming a party of Canadian Emigrants from Ontario to the New Territory". Applications would be received "until the fifteenth day of September next". "Ho for the Assiniboine!" the advertisement began.

Terms of through passage to Fort Garry, conditions and statement of outfit, together with all other important information will be afforded upon application by mail. P.O. address, Perth, Ontario.<sup>5</sup>

The Manitoba Act had only come into effect on July 15. No surveyors were in the new province and, needless to say, no preparations were being made to receive immigrants. Yet Mair and his associates were taking it upon themselves to encourage a movement of people to the new province.

Members of "Canada First" were busy with other affairs on July 19 when Mair's advertisement appeared.<sup>6</sup> By August 2, however, they were able to give their attention to emigration to Manitoba, meeting at the Mechanics Institute in Toronto. John Haldan, the man appointed to be chairman, does not appear to have been a member of "Canada First", but most of the others mentioned in the press report were. Denison moved that an association be formed "for the purpose of assisting emigrants who desire to settle in the North-West Territories of the Dominion." Mair spoke in support of the resolution, followed by Schultz. Schultz made these points:

...Red River was a desirable place to emigrate to: another was that there were numbers who wished to emigrate: and a third was that if not done by us it would speedily be done by others.

W. Howland seconded Denison's motion, and it was carried unanimously. J.D. Edgar then made a long speech outlining the principles of the organization being founded. He could hardly have been more explicit:

Ontario had laboured long and hard to acquire that fertile region, and now that it was within her grasp, she must see to it that the land was peopled and settled by a population liberal and intelligent, and in sympathy with her own language and traditions. As Dr. Schultz had hinted there was a determined effort being made to import another element into the population, whose political and national sympathies would be a bar to progress, and to the extension of a great Anglo-Saxon Dominion across the continent. This attempt could be counteracted only by the people of Ontario and by such action as [was] proposed....

Efforts should be made, Edgar concluded, both to encourage Ontario's enterprising young men "to settle in our own Great West" and to "prevent English-speaking emigrants from passing through here to settle in the United States". Communications should be established with all the Emigration Aid Societies in Britain for that purpose.

Edgar then moved, seconded by W.A. Foster, a series of resolutions intended to place the new society on a sound practical basis. Until the appointment of permanent officers Hugh Scott was "empowered to open a book and take the names of persons who desire to become members of the Association". A committee was appointed to frame a constitution and by-laws.<sup>7</sup>

No one, it must be observed, is reported as reminding the meeting that no surveys were under way in Manitoba, or that, as things stood, settlers arriving there would either have to "squat" on unoccupied land or purchase land from those already established. If they talked privately of possible violence resulting from clashes over land this has not been recorded.

The North-West Emigration Aid Society of Canada produced its "Circular No. 1" on October 12, 1870. Denison was careful to preserve a copy of it in his papers. The circular contained the text of a letter sent to the Hon. Christopher Dunkin, Minister of Agriculture and Emigration, on September 22 as well as the text of Dunkin's reply of September 28. It also contained comments on the minister's reply. Both the letters and the comments are worthy of study since they contain matters of intrinsic interest. The comments, in particular, reveal that the men of "Canada First" had grasped the essentially imperial implications of the Manitoba Act, and were eager to take advantage of them. In producing the Society's first circular they were pushing themselves forward into the role of giving advice about the administration and use of land which only one or two of them had ever seen.<sup>8</sup>

The letter of September 22, 1870, had asked five questions:

First. What quantity of land may a settler obtain?

Second. Will he be entitled to a free grant, and if so upon what conditions? or will the government demand any, and what price per acre?

Third. Have any townships been surveyed? and if so, in what localities?

Fourth. Until surveys are made, will immigrants settling on unoccupied lands obtain thereby a prescriptive right to purchase, or to a free grant?

[has] any organized system of transport VIA Lake Superior, Rainy Lake, and Lake of the Woods, ... been adopted for the accommodation of emigrants next spring[?]

Questions three and four reveal that the lack of a comprehensive survey had indeed been discussed, and that these men well understood the implications, both of that lack of a survey and of what they were doing by encouraging the emigration of settlers to Manitoba at this time.

Dunkin answered these questions by

a reference to the assurances given on behalf of the Government when the Manitoba Bill was under discussion in Parliament to the effect that every practicable effort will be made by a liberal land-policy and otherwise, to further the development of the resources of Manitoba and the adjacent territories. The whole question of the best means to be taken to this end is still necessarily under consideration. But as soon as possible after the Government shall have received such reports from the Lieutenant-Governor as may enable it to act in this most important matter, it will not fail to make public its policy in respect of the various matters as to which your letter inquires.

It is difficult to see how Dunkin could have replied otherwise. By September 22 Lieutenant-governor Archibald had barely been able to organize his government, let alone set in motion the taking of the "enumeration" which was essential to his carrying out his instructions where the lands of Manitoba were concerned.<sup>9</sup>

In its comments upon Dunkin's reply the Society regretted that no land policy for the North-West had been decided upon, "as a season has been lost by the delay". It then went on to deal with what it called the "excuse for delay".

The excuse for delay seems liable to the charge of unconstitutionality, because "all ungranted or waste lands in the Province shall be, from and after the date of the said transfer, vested in the Crown, and administered by the Government of Canada for the purposes of the Dominion" (Manitoba Act, 33 Vic.,

Cap. 3, Sec. 30). They are not subject in any way to the action of the local authorities, whose opinion and advice, the Minister informs us, he is waiting for.

"It will be regarded," the Committee's comment went on,

as an abdication of the functions and the trust which Parliament has, for very good reasons, specially reserved to the Government of the Dominion, to submit questions respecting the terms on which the lands of the people of the Dominion are to be granted, to a newly organized local authority, swayed by contending factions, some of whom were recently in arms against the Government of the Dominion.

The Committee was careful not to remind its readers that Section 31 of the same Act had, at the insistence of the Red River delegates, reserved 1,400,000 acres of the ungranted lands "for the benefit of the families of the Half-breed residents", and empowered the Lieutenant-governor to "select such lots or tracts... as he may deem expedient" and divide the same among the children of the half-breed heads of families residing in the province at the time of the said transfer to Canada...." The Committee was, instead, coolly suggesting that the Minister disregard local considerations and advice as he set about determining a policy with regard to the lands of the new province.

It will be remembered that at one stage in the negotiations concerning the Manitoba bill Macdonald and Cartier had promised to "authorize by order in council the persons [the Red River delegates] would choose to name... to form a committee charged with choosing and dividing... the 1,400,000 acres..."<sup>10</sup> The Red River delegates had originally urged that this distribution of lands to the Métis ought to be "under the supervision"<sup>11</sup> of the local legislature. The promised order-in-council had never materialized, and in its place Cartier had given Ritchot the letter of May 23, 1870, in which the post script stated that

the regulations authorized to be made from time to time by the Governor in Council respecting that reserve, will be such as to meet the wishes of the Half-breed residents....<sup>12</sup>

Ritchot made the letter public in 1874 and the full text may be found in the Report of the Select Committee published in the House of Commons Journals for that year.

Lieutenant-governor Archibald was in a special position with respect to these "ungranted or waste lands" in Manitoba. He had been appointed "Administrator" of these "ungranted or waste lands" with instructions "to report to this department...the regulations which... should be made...under the 31<sup>st</sup> section of the Act...for the selection of lands...and their division among the children of the half-breed heads of families residing in the province at the time of the transfer ...together with the mode and conditions, as to settlement or otherwise, which you may consider desirable to embody in such regulations."<sup>13</sup> Accordingly Archibald had instructions "to cause an enumeration to be made of the half-breed heads of families residing in the said Province at the time of such transfer and of their children respectively".<sup>14</sup> Such an enumeration was absolutely essential if the exact population of Half-breeds involved was to be known to those having to make decisions. The appointment was given expression in a letter dated August 4, 1870, and signed by E.A. Meredith, Under Secretary of State for the Provinces. There can be little doubt that the special appointment of Archibald as "Administrator" of these "ungranted or waste lands" indicated that the Canadian government intended to keep the spirit of the promises made to the Red River delegates in Cartier's letter. Circular No. 1 of the North-West Emigration Aid Society reveals that even before Archibald could make the necessary "enumeration" there were men lobbying the government who were prepared to suppress information about the portions of the Manitoba Act which applied to the Métis of that province.

## Appendix "A"

Meredith's Letter of August 4, 1870

Office of the Secretary of State For The Provinces  
Ottawa, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1870

Sir, - I have the honor, by command of His Excellency the Governor General, to transmit to you, herewith, a copy of an Order of His Excellency in Council of the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant, together with a copy of the memorandum of the Honorable Sir George Et. Cartier, therein referred to.

I have also the honor to inform you that His Excellency has been pleased, in terms of the said Order in Council, to appoint you Administrator on behalf of the Government of Canada, of the ungranted or waste lands in that Province, vested in the Crown, and I have to request that as such Administrator you will have the goodness, at your earliest convenience, to report to this Department for His Excellency's information the Regulations which, in your opinion, should be made by His Excellency in Council under the 31<sup>st</sup> section the Act cited in the memorandum, for the selection of lands, to the extent thereof mentioned, from among the ungranted lands in the Province of Manitoba, and their division among the children of the half-breeds heads of families residing in that Province at the time of the transfer of the same to Canada, together with the mode and conditions, as to settlement or otherwise, which you may consider desirable to embody in such regulations.

I have etc.

(signed) E.A. Meredith  
Under Secretary of State for the Provinces

The Honorable A.G. Archibald  
Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba

(C.S.P. 1871 (No. 20), E.A. Meredith to Archibald, August 4, 1870, 4.)

<sup>1</sup> See G.T. Denison, Soldiering, 179. See also Denison, Struggle, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Globe, May 16, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan Toronto Library, Denison Papers, Schultz to Denison, May 30, 1870.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, May 20, 1870.

<sup>5</sup> Globe, July 19, 1870.

<sup>6</sup> They were busy arranging the great "indignation meeting" of July 22<sup>nd</sup>. See below the chapter "The Red River Expeditionary Force."

<sup>7</sup> Globe, August 4, 1870. The Constitution is in Metropolitan Toronto Library, Denison Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Metropolitan Toronto Library, Denison Papers. The Executive Committee consisted of the following: Hon. W. McDougall, A. McLean Howard, John Haldan, G.R. Kingsmill, G.M. Rae, W.H. Howland, K. McKenzie, Q.C., G.T. Denison, Jr., W. Arthurs, W.A. Foster, J.D. Edgar, R. Graham. Schultz's name does not appear in the list.

<sup>9</sup> See Manitoba, October 15, 1870, for proclamations showing Archibald's steps in setting up his administration.

<sup>10</sup> Birth, Ritchot's Journal, May 5, 1870, 147.

<sup>11</sup> Birth, Ritchot's Journal, May 2, 1870, 143.

<sup>12</sup> For the text of this letter see Appendix "A" of the chapter entitled "Negotiations Leading To The Manitoba Act."

<sup>13</sup> C.S.P. 1871 (No. 20), E.A. Meredith to Archibald, August 4, 1870, 7. See Appendix "A" of this chapter for the complete text.

<sup>14</sup> C.S.P. 1871 (No. 20), E.A. Meredith to Archibald, August 4, 1870, 4.

### The Summer of the Provisional Government

Near the end of the negotiations in May of 1870 Father Ritchot asked Cartier who was to govern Manitoba pending the arrival of the Lieutenant-governor. Cartier asked whether Riel was sufficiently powerful to maintain order. Ritchot answered that he thought he was. "Let him continue till the governor arrives," Cartier replied. "Let him be at the head of the people to receive the Governor".<sup>1</sup>

When Ritchot arrived in the Red River Settlement in June he reported this conversation to Riel. Riel stated that he was not enthusiastic about "maintaining order under such difficult circumstances...but that nevertheless he would continue".<sup>2</sup>

Riel had, indeed, been having a difficult time of it, but the difficulties were not where Ritchot may have been led to believe. He had left Red River at the end of a rather turbulent period when the Canadian party had staged what for want of a better term could be described as an early intaglio Jameson's Raid. A bona fide popular movement had been interrupted again and again by the acts of a tiny party of recent arrivals with little or no standing or stake in the Settlement. This party was responsible for the first bloodshed of the Red River Insurrection. By March 23, when Ritchot began his long journey to Canada, the last of these men and their Portage recruits had been released from confinement in Fort Garry and had either returned to Canada or were living in the Settlement having given their word to take no action against the Provisional Government.<sup>3</sup>

In the following months the Provisional Government had to act simultaneously in matters now considered municipal, provincial and federal, and do it while maintaining order and laying the foundation for a provincial government. This was no mean undertaking.

The council elected in February and eventually known as the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia began to meet on March 9. After hearing Bishop Taché on March 15 the Assembly set to work and appointed three committees: one to draw up a constitution, one to review the old laws of the Settlement and one to consider the Hay privilege. The meetings which were held as a result of the work of the Hay privilege committee saw the people of Red River doing something that the people of the area between the Red River and the Rockies have never since had the opportunity to do. They discussed the way that they wished to hold their land.<sup>4</sup> These people assumed, quite reasonably, that under the new order their local legislature would have the control and management of their lands. People followed these discussions with interest as they were reported in the New Nation. When Major Robinson resigned as editor on March 19 and no issue appeared on March 25, people expressed their complaints.

The reasons for Robinson's resignation are not clear, although his appointment by Malmros as American vice-consul probably had something to do with it. Disagreements with Riel and others about editorial policy and news coverage could also have played a part. At any rate, those who had been following the doings of the council committees urged that something be done. Negotiations of some kind went on behind the scenes. Major Robinson had to be conducted by a guard to the Fort, and arrangements were completed with him to give up the keys to the New Nation office. Robinson was then set at liberty and Thomas Spence took possession.<sup>5</sup> An edition of the New Nation was published on April 2. Spence continued as publisher of the paper until early September. By means of its news reports we can form a good idea of what was happening in the months before the arrival of the Lieutenant-governor in September.

In the latter part of March John Bruce, the minister of public works, set a crew to work repairing the floating bridge over the Assiniboine river. Ice had to be cut away from the bridge

to save it from being taken out in the spring break-up. This work went on until the Assiniboine was free of ice.<sup>6</sup>

In early April a regular force of four policemen was on duty in Winnipeg.<sup>7</sup> Policing was necessary on a wider front too. People at the Portage sent a complaint concerning the behavior of the Indians, and a guard was sent.<sup>8</sup> The presence of an effective police force was a welcome feature of the summer of 1870. More than once during this season Begg confided to the journal he was keeping such comments as this: "Taking it altogether the Settlement has been more quiet this season than it ever was before in the shape of drinking and fighting".<sup>9</sup>

In early April, too, the Provisional Government issued two proclamations. The first, on April 7, stated in general terms the aims and objectives of the Provisional Government.<sup>10</sup> The second, on April 9, announced that the Hudson's Bay Company was resuming business and circulating currency, that the public highways were open, that an amnesty would be accorded to all who would submit to the Provisional Government.<sup>11</sup> Patrice Breland was sent to the interior with this proclamation,<sup>12</sup> and on April 13 Lane's Fort, used as an outpost during much of the Insurrection, was returned to the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>13</sup>

An argument took place between Riel and O'Donoghue concerning the flag to be flown at the Fort. O'Donoghue wanted to fly only the Provisional Government flag, but Riel insisted on the Union Jack.<sup>14</sup> Eventually John C. Schultz's flagpole, which had flaunted the "Canada" ensign in mid-1869, was dug up and removed to the Fort,<sup>15</sup> and after a time the Union Jack and the flag of the Provisional Government flew side by side. This remained true until the arrival of the Expeditionary Force in late August.<sup>16</sup>

Between April 24 and April 29 Riel and the Provisional Government were hosts to the Marshall party, which visited the Settlement with a view to promoting the interests of Jay

Cooke's Northern Pacific railway.<sup>17</sup> William Rainey Marshall was a former governor of the state of Minnesota and the founder of the St. Paul Daily Press, and it must be assumed that he would have welcomed any sign that Riel and his government were prepared to favor American railway interests. Whether other matters were discussed, such as annexation to the American republic, is not known. It is curious, though, that N.P. Langford, a member of the party, later used the words "thoroughly incorruptible" as well as "very diplomatic and non-committal" to describe Riel.<sup>18</sup> The fact that Langford saw fit to report the visit to James Wickes Taylor, who had always been interested in American expansion into Rupert's Land, may indicate that matters more political than railways were, in fact, discussed. In late April Taylor was in Ottawa doing his very best to learn about the negotiations then under way.<sup>19</sup> Métis tradition insists that at this time and later Riel was offered large amounts of money in return for an agreement to work for annexation of the Settlement to the United States or to give preferential treatment to the Cooke interests in any way possible.<sup>20</sup>

Elemental forces became part of the picture at Red River in May of 1870, providing Riel and his councillors with an unexpected opportunity and testing Riel's resolve in a way that nothing else could. Isaac Cowie told some of the story in his book The Company of Adventurers and other sources allow us to piece together the rest of it.<sup>21</sup>

The great smallpox epidemic of 1869 and 1870 began at Fort Benton on the upper reaches of the Missouri river and spread northward with the movements of several tribes. It was especially virulent among the Assiniboines and Blackfoot in what is now southern Alberta, and eventually reached the Crees of the north Saskatchewan country. News of its spread reached Fort Qu'Appelle, where Cowie was stationed, "towards fall". No sooner had this news come than Pascal Breland and Salomon Hamelin, councillors of Assiniboia, came to visit the fort.

These men had seen that there was going to be trouble at Red River and decided that the prudent thing for them was to be out of the Settlement when it happened. Breland had heard rumors of the disease, and had caused one of his grand-children to be vaccinated before leaving the Settlement. Cowie knew of the value of vaccination, and asked Breland for permission to take lymph from the grand-child's arm, and that was done. Cowie secured on bits of window glass enough vaccine to protect everyone requiring it in the fort. From these people the supply was increased sufficiently to vaccinate all the people about the Qu' Appelle lakes and the Indians who visited during the fall of 1869. Those who had been thus vaccinated did likewise with the Touchwood Hills Indians. In this way a barrier to the spread of the disease was created in what is now eastern Saskatchewan.

So it was that conflicting reports about the disease began to reach Red River. We now know that all these reports were true, depending upon the area they came from. Winterers came to Red River who said there was no smallpox.<sup>22</sup> Winterers came from farther west who reported seeing entire Indian encampments dead of the disease.<sup>23</sup> The result was that the movements of the winterers during the spring and summer of 1870 were not those of a typical year. Many decided that the wise thing to do was remain at Red River until it appeared that the danger had passed.

May brought exceptional news to Red River from the East too. On May 3 came the news of the excitement caused by Schultz and his "Canada First" committees in Ontario.<sup>24</sup> Then the New Nation published news of the arrests of Ritchot and Scott in Ottawa.<sup>25</sup> The response of the Provisional Government was to issue, on May 14, "The Protest of the Peoples of the North-West".<sup>26</sup> This was sent to the newspapers in St. Paul and Canada, and was likely read to the winterers at the special meeting in Fort Garry called for May 17. The "Protest" reminded the

general public that the people at Red River had always maintained their loyalty to the Queen of England and that the "English flag" then floated over Fort Garry.

If the winterers were satisfied with Riel's remarks of May 17, as the New Nation reported,<sup>27</sup> this changed on May 19 with the news that an expeditionary force was being sent to Red River.<sup>28</sup> The winterers – wiser than Riel and the clergy – saw intuitively that this expedition could only be punitive, and began to murmur that it would have to be prevented from reaching Red River.<sup>29</sup> Riel and his councillors were forced to meet the winterers at White Horse Plain on May 23. A "great many" winterers were there.<sup>30</sup> Begg did not know what was done there, and the New Nation carried no report. However, Henry McKinney later told the St. Paul Daily Pioneer that "the unanimous sentiment seemed to be for war". McKinney thought that a declaration of independence would be issued, and told the Pioneer that nine-tenths of the Red River would now favor annexation to the United States.<sup>31</sup>

Begg's journal entry for May 27 again told of a "feeling" in the minds of the French with regard to the Canadian "Volunteers coming here".<sup>32</sup>

It was well known at Red River that there were many places along the Winnipeg river as well as near Lake of the Woods where a comparatively small force could cripple a much larger armed force.<sup>33</sup> The Métis knew where these places were, and there were many of them at Red River in May and June of 1870 who were volunteering to do it. Riel was under great pressure at this time to abandon his pro-Canadian policy. William O'Donoghue then and later favored annexation to the United States,<sup>34</sup> as did John Bruce.<sup>35</sup> Elzéar Goulet, an American citizen, probably supported this view. These men could support Riel so long as it appeared that Canada was well disposed toward Red River, but the news of the Expeditionary Force convinced them

otherwise. Begg was probably aware of these views when he wrote on June 1 that "Some say that Riel is undecided on how to act...."<sup>36</sup>

Riel was having to temporize, although his task was made a little easier by the fact that many hoped to hear a report, from the lips of Ritschot himself, on the success of the negotiations at Ottawa. Long before he was able to leave that capital in the beginning of June,<sup>37</sup> people were watching anxiously for him at Red River.<sup>38</sup>

However, the demands for action continued, and on June 2 Bishop Taché visited White Horse Plains.<sup>39</sup> There can be little doubt about his errand there. His letter to Joseph Howe, secretary of state for the provinces, tells both of Taché's fears and of the action he took in consequence: "Some speak of raising a large force to meet and molest the coming troops at some difficult point on their way hither," he wrote, "and other plans, perhaps still more dangerous, are also afloat." "I solemnly gave my word of honor," Taché continued, "and promised even in the name of the Canadian government that the troops are sent on an errand of peace". Taché had gone on to promise that "a complete and entire amnesty" would be granted "before the arrival of the troops".<sup>40</sup>

Alexandre-Antoin Taché had then spent nearly 25 years of his life in Rupert's Land, first as priest and then as Bishop of Saint Boniface.<sup>41</sup> He was born of a French-Canadian family that counted both Louis Jolliet and Pierre Gaultier de Varennes et de la Vérendrye among their ancestors. In more recent times his uncle Etienne-Paschal Taché had chaired the Quebec confederation conference of 1864, and defended in the Legislative Council the 72 resolutions which resulted.<sup>42</sup> He did not live, however, to see the confederation he had worked toward. Bishop Taché's elder brother, Joseph-Charles, was the deputy-minister of agriculture and statistics. In 1857 he had published in Le Courrier du Canada a fully documented and detailed

scheme for the federation of the British North American provinces.<sup>43</sup> The Taché family could be numbered among the architects of Confederation, and Bishop Taché thought that he could see a place in this scheme where the people he had worked among so long could prosper in the full enjoyment of their rights as Catholics and French-speaking citizens. The last thing he now wanted was to see strife that would feature dead bodies in the Winnipeg river or near Rainy lake. He must do all possible to avoid this bloodshed.

Having decided to write the letter to Howe, Taché found himself watching anxiously for the arrival of Father Ritchot. A rumor went through the Settlement to the effect that the Provisional Government had decided to make a declaration of independence on Monday, June 13, but that day came and went without any such declaration being made.<sup>44</sup> Begg recorded on June 14 that Bishop Taché had had success in reconciling the Nolins of Oak Point with the Provisional Government.<sup>45</sup> The prelate was by no means inactive while he was waiting.

The "International" with Father Ritchot on board arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon of June 17.<sup>46</sup> It entered the Assiniboine river and tied up opposite Fort Garry. Joseph Dubuc, who was with Father Ritchot, has described how, beginning about twenty-five miles upstream from Fort Garry people on both sides of the river came out of their houses and saluted the familiar figure of Father Ritchot, who was silhouetted on the superstructure of the steamboat. No sooner had the "International" come to the loading platform than an incessant firing of muskets and artillery began which lasted more than twenty minutes.<sup>47</sup> It was a most memorable occasion. Enthusiasm was at its height, and it is not remarkable that all his life Gabriel Dumont told of being at Fort Garry on June 17, 1870,<sup>48</sup> and of offering to bring five hundred men to help the Provisional Government repel the Expeditionary Force then on its way west on the ancient voyageurs' route.

Once Dumont learned that a general amnesty had not arrived with Ritchot his intuition, born of long experience with Indians in the West, told him that the Expeditionary Force could only be punitive, no matter what the Provisional Government and the Catholic clergy might say. He could not understand Riel's refusal of help and hoped he would change his mind. "If you do something," he said, "send for me and I'll come with my wild men!"

It is not known how long Dumont and his "wild men" remained in the Settlement. Begg reported on June 22 the departure of some plain hunters and the arrival of some from the Saskatchewan.<sup>49</sup> It is certain, however, that on June 27 Bishop Taché went up to the White Horse Plain to see the people there.<sup>50</sup> He was able to tell them of his announced intention to leave by the next boat for Canada. Taché carried with him the document signifying the consent of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia to accept the Manitoba Act and enter Confederation. More important, he carried within himself the determination to do everything in his power to have the amnesty which he had promised issued by the Canadian government. He later told the Select Committee of the House of Commons of his reply when the men of the Provisional Government spoke to him of defending themselves against a hostile expeditionary force. "Don't do that!" he had said. "I give you my word of honour that a general amnesty will be proclaimed before the installation of any Canadian lieutenant-governor here".<sup>51</sup>

It is not clear how much Taché knew about the dissatisfaction in the Lower Settlement, where most of Riel's opposition had been, both at the time of the February counter-movement and later in the debates of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. Alexander Begg heard on May 22 from Drever, O'Lone and McKenney that all but one clause of the Bill of Rights had been placed in the Manitoba bill,<sup>52</sup> but if that news caused displeasure – as it certainly would have if the "one clause" was about land – it was confirmed on May 27 when a text of the bill

appeared in the New Nation.<sup>53</sup> Men like Alfred Boyd, Dr. Bird, Donald Gunn, E.H.G.G. Hay, Thomas Bunn and John Sutherland of Point Douglas – would certainly not like to hear that the new “province” was not to have control of its ungranted lands. Ritchot made his formal report on June 24,<sup>54</sup> and that same day Begg reported “a great deal of feeling” on the part of the English-speaking settlers.<sup>55</sup> Begg made a similar entry on June 27.<sup>56</sup> There was anger among the English-speaking settlers, a blind anger that would simmer and stew and eventually lead such men as Gunn, Hay and Sutherland\* to follow a man who had sold them out in preference to a man who had tried to persuade them to insist on what they now saw was lost.

Taché left the Settlement on June 28 with a deep sense of foreboding.<sup>57</sup> He thought that he had persuaded his people not to oppose the approaching Expeditionary Force. There would be no bloodshed. But he had listened to Father Ritchot and to the objections of the people and now saw something else. If the Expeditionary Force proved to be hostile and there was no amnesty the Settlement would be leaderless. Oh, Schultz would try to be leader, but the Métis would never accept Schultz and there would be endless trouble. A general amnesty – an amnesty that would include the Lower Settlement, where the first blood had been shed, as well as the acts of the Provisional Government – was the only solution to the problems the Settlement faced. That was what he must work for now.

Problems of security in July had to do with the Indians.<sup>58</sup> The agents sent to the Indians by Dennis the previous winter had done their work well, promising the Indians money and presents.<sup>59</sup> In July the Indians came to the Settlement to collect, and it was probably fortunate for the Settlement in general that the Provisional Government was in occupation at Fort Garry. The Indians feared and respected the Métis in a way that they feared and respected nobody else. The policy of the Provisional Government was to conciliate the Indians and ask them to go away

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\* John Sutherland of Kildonan

to their homes.<sup>60</sup> Begg wrote on July 18, "A large number of Indians are in. Riel has given them presents".<sup>61</sup> Not the least of the achievements of the Provisional Government was its success in dealing with the potentially disastrous situation created by McDougall's proclamation and Dennis's promises in carrying it out.

It was known in July that the Canadians were up to something in the Lower Settlement. They were gathering supplies at Monkman's in preparation for a trip up the Winnipeg river to meet the Expeditionary Force.<sup>62</sup>

The most remarkable event of July was probably the Butler affair, well-known to readers of The Great Lone Land. Butler had been sent to the North-West on a triple errand, two parts of which had been done by the time he crossed into Manitoba. He was to pay a visit to Duluth, Minnesota, and watch for signs of Fenian activity. He found none. He was to visit supply houses in St. Paul and make arrangements for supplies to be forwarded to Winnipeg in late August for delivery in early September. This had been done, too, but not without word of his presence getting into the newspapers. Finally he was to visit the new province – it was Canadian territory after July 15 – and see whether Wolseley could expect to meet with opposition.<sup>63</sup>

In St. Paul Butler met Bishop Taché, then on his way to Canada, who gave him a letter of introduction and assured him that all would go well with him at Fort Garry, since the Provisional Government had accepted the Manitoba Act.<sup>64</sup> With this document in hand Butler could have had a pleasant holiday at Fort Garry as he carried out his errands for the Canadian military. His behavior at Fort Garry gives us a hint of the fear and suspicion which afflicted so many of those in the "Canada First" group and those – like Wolseley – who had associated themselves with it.<sup>65</sup>

No one interfered with Butler at Pembina, where the Provisional Government maintained a guard which had stopped a number of people until they explained themselves.<sup>66</sup> At Pembina,

however, Butler heard rumors, which he chose to believe, about the intention of Riel to have him arrested at Fort Garry.<sup>67</sup> When the "International" entered the Assiniboine to tie up opposite Fort Garry, Butler and his companion Drever jumped from the vessel, landed in the mud, and scrambled up the bank and through the deepening darkness past Fort Garry.<sup>68</sup> This remarkable behavior was noticed by everyone at the gangplank and quite naturally aroused their suspicions. Runners were sent in pursuit. Drever was arrested, but Butler made good his escape, and walked to the Lower Settlement. Not before a couple of days had passed did he return to Fort Garry. Then, when Riel asked to see him, he laid down certain conditions<sup>69</sup> and was careful not to set foot in what was known as Government House.<sup>70</sup>

The interview with Riel took place in the Fort's recreation room.<sup>71</sup> As Butler recorded it Riel denied that he was making active preparations to resist the Red River Expeditionary Force:

I only wish to retain power until I can resign it to a proper government. I have done everything for the sake of peace, and to prevent bloodshed amongst the people of this land.<sup>72</sup>

In spite of suspicions which his remarkable method of arriving had aroused, Butler was not arrested or molested in any way during his stay in the Settlement.<sup>73</sup> It is true that his companion was arrested and that Butler was pursued, but as Joseph Dubuc, correspondent of La Minerve, pointed out, their conduct upon arrival made this inevitable. The Provisional Government would have been lax in its duties if it had not sought to find out who the "mysterious stranger" was.<sup>74</sup> When he was informed that Butler was going to the Expeditionary Force, Riel asked several questions about it and then brought the conversation back to what the Provisional Government had done for the "advantage of his country".<sup>75</sup> Riel's last words to Butler were

Had I been your enemy you would have known it before. I heard you would not visit me, and, although I felt humiliated, I came to see you to show you my pacific inclinations.<sup>76</sup>

While he was in the Settlement, Butler learned that Wolseley had written to the Hudson's Bay Company "urging the construction of a road between Fort Garry and Lake of the Woods".<sup>77</sup> If he had learned that from Balsillie – who had gone into the Lower Settlement to find him – or from McTavish – who had arranged the meeting with Riel – he must surely have learned of Riel's efforts to have Wolseley's proclamation printed and distributed. Riel had consulted with Bannatyne and had a "couple of hundred copies" circulated among the people.<sup>78</sup> Butler was most likely able to take a copy with him to show to Wolseley!

An hour later Butler left Fort Garry and began his journey to meet the Expeditionary Force. On the way he made contact with the Canadians at Monkman's in the Lower Settlement.<sup>79</sup>

Unfortunately for historians, with the issuing of Wolseley's proclamation by the Provisional Government, Begg ceased to keep a journal. Mrs. Begg had left for Canada in May, and the Bannatynes left on July 24 for a visit to Scotland. Begg was left in charge, and there just was not enough spare time to make the daily entries.<sup>80</sup> We are fortunate, however, in that in late July and early August Joseph Dubuc was writing regular columns for the Montreal newspaper La Minerve. Dubuc had arrived on June 17 with Father Ritchot.<sup>81</sup> At Riel's invitation he had spent the first couple of weeks at Fort Garry,<sup>82</sup> in constant contact with the members of the Provisional Government and in an excellent position to see all that was going on. Then he moved over to St. Boniface, but maintained his interest in events and recorded them for La Minerve.<sup>83</sup>

Dubuc wrote in late July about the deep concern caused by the fact that no amnesty had yet arrived.<sup>84</sup> The people at Red River knew of the fanaticism that existed in a portion of the

Ontario press, and knew too that the fanaticism had representatives in the Expeditionary Force. Dubuc pointed out that the desire for an amnesty arose not from a feeling of guilt but from a desire to see peace and order reign in the country. There could be neither if the men in the Force were intent upon revenge.<sup>85</sup> Dubuc wrote that the Provisional Government had had to temporize and was even now having to temporize before demands that measures be taken to resist the Expeditionary Force. There were many who did not trust the Canadian government in the way that Riel advised.

In early August Dubuc wrote that people were arriving from various parts of the country and asking to be allowed to act against the Force. He wrote that Riel needed all the prestige he had to be able to hold these people in check. He quoted Riel as saying,

What could be more magnificent than to see yourself surrounded by soldiers that you have to restrain?

Accounts of an outbreak of smallpox had forced many Métis to return to the Settlement who would ordinarily be on the hunt.<sup>86</sup>

News came to the Settlement of the death, in Liverpool, of Mr. Mactavish, ex-governor of the Hudson's Bay Company who had left the Settlement on May 17. Both flags at Fort Garry flew at half mast.<sup>87</sup>

The New Nation for August 13 also carried news of the annual Hudson's Bay Company council, held at Norway House. Donald Smith acted as president. On June 15 Begg's journal had mentioned Smith's by-passing Fort Garry on his way there. Begg had speculated that Smith had judged it wise not to come by way of Fort Garry because of what he had said in his report.<sup>88</sup> Among other things in its report of the council's decisions, the New Nation mentioned that James G. Stewart, who had been chief factor at Norway House, was to have furlough.<sup>89</sup>

In response to the proclamation of Wolseley sixty men were sent to work on the Lake of the Woods road.<sup>90</sup> A little later a small detachment of men were sent out to Lake of the Woods to welcome Lieutenant-governor-designate Archibald and escort him into the Settlement.<sup>91</sup>

August 23 saw the return of Bishop Taché, accompanied by Messrs. Girard, of Varennes in the province of Quebec, and Joseph Royal of Le Nouveau Monde, the Montreal newspaper.<sup>92</sup> Taché gave Riel assurance that all would be well. Riel had been watching for emissaries from the Expeditionary Force, but none came. That very evening news came that the Red River Expeditionary Force was only a few miles to the north of Fort Garry, and could be expected to arrive the next day. Riel called a meeting of his executive, and three messengers were sent to meet it. These messengers did not return.<sup>93</sup> Joseph Dubuc, Marc Girard and Joseph Royal came to see the members of the council, and Riel called a recess for fifteen minutes to allow for a bit of conversation. Riel then saw them to the Red River ferry and noticed that it had begun to rain a little.<sup>94</sup> He went back to the meeting and reminded the councillors that their duty was not to leave the Fort until the troops took it. Riel feared that some of their enemies of the previous winter might take advantage of the approach of the troops to take the Fort.

Riel and four men: Pierre Champagne, Colonel Gay, Baptiste Nault, and Francis St. Luc, went on horseback to reconnoitre on the west bank of the Red river, while O'Donoghue and two men did the same on the east bank.<sup>95</sup> They left in a drenching rain which was coming from the north. It was so dark that two men on horseback, holding each other's hand, could hardly see each other. Presently they sighted the glimmers of campfires in the distance. Their horses were nervous and snorted considerably, so they rode back to the Fort. There Riel spoke to all those on duty. He took off his wet overcoat and shoes, threw two heavy blankets over himself and had a sleep.<sup>96</sup> When he woke up he had breakfast. William Fraser came to the Fort in the early

morning, and Riel asked him if he had seen the troops. Praser said that he had not. Riel, recalling a conversation of the early days of political activity, said to him, "Now you are going to know my intentions".<sup>97</sup>

It was August 24, 1870. In the months since the negotiations of April and May Riel and the Provisional Government had been "sufficiently powerful to maintain order".

<sup>1</sup> "Report... 1874", 77 and 81.

<sup>2</sup> "Report... 1874", 81.

<sup>3</sup> Begg's Journal, 343.

<sup>4</sup> New Nation has the report of the debates.

<sup>5</sup> Begg's Journal, 348.

<sup>6</sup> Begg's Journal, 349 - April 1; New Nation, April 2 and 8, 1870; Begg noted on April 10 that "several bridges" had been "injured from freshets".

<sup>7</sup> Begg's Journal, 349-350.

<sup>8</sup> Begg's Journal, 357.

<sup>9</sup> Begg's Journal, 374.

<sup>10</sup> New Nation, April 15, 1870; Begg's Journal, 522-4.

<sup>11</sup> The text of the Proclamation is in Begg's Journal, 354-5.

<sup>12</sup> Begg's Journal, 352-3; See also Isaac Cowie, Company of Adventurers, 412.

<sup>13</sup> Begg's Journal, 357.

<sup>14</sup> Begg's Journal, 360 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Begg's Journal, 361. Begg made a number of entries concerning these flags between April 20 and May 24.

<sup>16</sup> L.A. Prud'Homme, Monsieur L'Abbé Louis-Raymond Giroux, 38-9.

<sup>17</sup> Begg's Journal, 362-4.

<sup>18</sup> Begg's Journal, 519-21.

<sup>19</sup> W.L. Morton (ed.), Birth of A Province, Taylor's Letters, 47-65.

<sup>20</sup> Donation Frémont, Les Secrétaires de Riel, 57; George Dugas, Histoire Véridique, 187; L.A. Prud'Homme, op. cit., 37.

<sup>21</sup> Cowie, Company of Adventurers, 380-383; Butler, Great Lone Land (afterwards Great), 202-5.

<sup>22</sup> Begg's Journal, May 7 and 14, 368 and 371.

<sup>23</sup> Begg's Journal, 365.

<sup>24</sup> Begg's Journal, 366.

<sup>25</sup> New Nation, May 6, 1870.

<sup>26</sup> Begg's Journal, 524-7.

<sup>27</sup> New Nation, May 20, 1870; Begg's Journal, 372.

<sup>28</sup> Begg's Journal, 373.

<sup>29</sup> Begg's Journal, 375; "Report... 1874", Taché's deposition, Taché to Joseph Howe, June 9, 1870, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Begg's Journal, 374-5.

<sup>31</sup> St. Paul Daily Pioneer, June 4, 1870.

<sup>32</sup> Begg's Journal, 376.

<sup>33</sup> L.A. Prud'Homme, op. cit., 41-2; Dugas, Histoire Véridique, 187.

<sup>34</sup> Dale Gibson, Attorney For The Frontier, 119.

<sup>35</sup> Le Courrier de St.-Hyacinthe, 5 fév, 1870.

<sup>36</sup> Begg's Journal, 377.

<sup>37</sup> "Report... 1874", Ritchot's deposition, 78.

<sup>38</sup> Begg's Journal, 375.

<sup>39</sup> Begg's Journal, 377.

<sup>40</sup> "Report... 1874", Taché's deposition, 32-3; Begg's Journal, 550-3.

<sup>41</sup> A good biography of Taché is Dom Benoit, Vie de M<sup>r</sup>. Taché (2 vol.).

- <sup>42</sup> See the article by Andr e D silets in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. IX, 774-8.
- <sup>43</sup> See the article by Jean-Guy Nadeau in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XII, 1014.
- <sup>44</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 380.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 382.
- <sup>47</sup> Dubuc's letter to *La Minerve* in *Revue d'histoire de l'Am ricaine Francaise* (afterwards *RHAF*), Vol. 20, No. 4, 1967, 625.
- <sup>48</sup> George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont*, 81ff.
- <sup>49</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 383.
- <sup>50</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 385.
- <sup>51</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 547; "Report...1874", Tach 's deposition, 32-3.
- <sup>52</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 374.
- <sup>53</sup> *New Nation*, May 27, 1870.
- <sup>54</sup> *New Nation*, July 1, 1870.
- <sup>55</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 384.
- <sup>56</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 385.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* Note that Benoit, *Vie de Mgr. Tach *, Vol. 2, 99, states that Tach  left on the 27<sup>th</sup>.
- <sup>58</sup> Begg mentioned them several times, especially July 18, 1870.
- <sup>59</sup> *La Minerve*, 11 août (Fort Garry, 19 juillet), 1870, AASEB, T7811, Bannatyne to Tach , Aug. 6, 1870.
- <sup>60</sup> *La Minerve*, 11 août (Fort Garry, 19 juillet), 1870.
- <sup>61</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 390.
- <sup>62</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 391; PAM MG C2, Eleanor R. Kennedy papers, Kennedy to MacLury, Oct. 10, 1870.
- <sup>63</sup> Newspapers carried many references to Butler: *New Nation*, July 23, 1870; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, Aug. 9, 1870; *La Minerve*, 13 août, 1870; *Telegraph*, Aug. 19, 1870; *St. Paul Weekly Press*, Aug. 25, 1870; "Narrative...", Part II, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Jan. 1871, 72; Benjamin Sulte, "L'Exp dition Militaire de Manitoba" in *Revue Canadienne*, juillet et août, 1871; H.S. Riddell, "Red River Expedition of 1870", 122. It has to be observed that what he told the *Telegraph* does not square with other accounts of the same event.
- <sup>64</sup> Butler, *Great*, 114.
- <sup>65</sup> Butler was acquainted with, if not a member of, that group. He visited Denison on the way to England from Canada in 1871. PAC MG9 E29 Denison Diary for 1871: "April 11, 1871 - Captain Butler of the 69<sup>th</sup> called to see me".
- <sup>66</sup> Butler, *Great*, 114.
- <sup>67</sup> Butler, *Great*, 117.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*; *Begg's Journal*, July 18, 1870, 391.
- <sup>69</sup> Butler, *Great*, 129.
- <sup>70</sup> *St. Paul Weekly Press*, Aug. 25, 1870.
- <sup>71</sup> Butler, *Great*, 133-6.
- <sup>72</sup> Butler, *Great*, 134.
- <sup>73</sup> *La Minerve*, 13 août, 1870.
- <sup>74</sup> The term is Begg's, *Begg's Journal*, 393.
- <sup>75</sup> Butler, *Great*, 135.
- <sup>76</sup> Butler, *Great*, 136.
- <sup>77</sup> Butler, *Great*, 129.
- <sup>78</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 392.
- <sup>79</sup> *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, Aug. 9, 1870.
- <sup>80</sup> *New Nation*, May 6, 1870; *New Nation*, July 30, 1870; "Writings...Riel", Vol. 1, 94.
- <sup>81</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 382.
- <sup>82</sup> *R.H.A.F.*, Vol. 20, 1966-7, No. 3, 438.
- <sup>83</sup> *R.H.A.F.*, Vol. 20, 1966-7, No. 3, 439.
- <sup>84</sup> *R.H.A.F.*, Vol. 20, 1966-7, No. 4, 630.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> *La Minerve*, 1<sup>er</sup> sept. (Fort Garry, 8 août), 1870.
- <sup>87</sup> *New Nation*, Aug. 13, 1870.
- <sup>88</sup> *Begg's Journal*, 381.
- <sup>89</sup> *New Nation*, Aug. 13, 1870.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; La Minerve, 1<sup>er</sup> sept. (Fort Garry, 8 août), 1870.

<sup>21</sup> La Minerve, 17 sept. (Fort Garry, 9 sept.), 1870.

<sup>22</sup> La Minerve, 10 sept. (Fort Garry, 27 août), 1870.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*; New York Herald, Sept. 16, from St. Paul Press, Sept. 12, 1870.

<sup>24</sup> A.H. de Trémudan (ed.), "Louis Riel's Account of the Capture of Fort Garry" in C.H.R., Vol. V, June 1924, 151-2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.