Hidden Agendas

By Allan Ronaghan

"..I would like the Local Legislature to have its power exerted from Fort Garry. I want this country to be governed by a Local Legislature. Our country had been hitherto differently governed, and they were within an ace of selling us. I say let the authority of the Legislature be everywhere and influencing everything."

(Riel, speaking in the Convention of Forty - New Nation, February 4, 1870)

Foreword

The scope of this study is the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870 and the Archibald administration of 1870-1872. Long treated by historians in terms of rebellion and restoration of law and order, this period is probably one of the least understood in our country's history.

Several conflicting interests had prevented the Red River people from achieving Crown Colony status. Not invited to any of the Confederation conferences and not consulted as to the new form of government, the people looked to the future without enthusiasm.

The result was a resistance on the part of the Settlement which believed it had the most to fear from entry into confederation. Months of strenuous political activity resulted in the formation of a Provisional Government led by Louis Riel and the sending of delegates to Ottawa to negotiate with the Canadian government.

The passing of the Manitoba Act and the organization of the so-called "province" of Manitoba did not represent a victory for those who had supported the Provisional Government since the Dominion government retained control of the lands.

The presence of the regiments left in the Settlement by Wolseley and the enforced absence of Riel make it impossible for Lieutenant-governor Archibald to find a premier who had majority support and who could have organized a proper provisional government.

The tragedy of the events of 1869 to 1872 is that Canada lost the services of a people who were a bridge, both between English and French and between Aboriginal and European. Also unfortunate was the substitution of an imperial system for one that could have been federal.

Allen Ronaghan
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John C. Schultz

One of the central figures of the Red River Insurrection, and the one who personally gained the most from it, is also one of the shadowiest. This is not remarkable, in one sense, because the gentleman made a profession of working behind the scenes and allowing others to do the dirty work. What is remarkable is that historians have allowed him to get away with it, seemingly ignoring the tracks he left.

John Christian Schultz was born January 1, 1840, the son of William Schultz of Bergen, Norway, and Elizabeth Reily of Bandon, Cork, Ireland, the widow of Henry McKenney, in Amherstburg, Upper Canada.[1] Known as a somewhat "bumptious" school-boy and young person, Schultz travelled to the Red River Settlement in the summer vacation of 1860 to visit his half-brother, Henry McKenney, the son of Elizabeth Reily by her first marriage. McKenney had been a frontier trader in Minnesota and had established himself in Red River in 1859. Schultz could see that there were opportunities there, and returned to the Settlement in 1861.[2] His tall, bronzed figure was soon a familiar part of the scene at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine.

Schultz always said that he had attended the prestigious Oberlin College at Oberlin, Ohio.[3] However, that college has no record of his attendance. He claimed to be a graduate of Queen's College, Kingston, and of Victoria University, Cobourg. Queen's records indicate that, while he did attend there for two terms, no degree was earned. Victoria's records show that he attended there one term, but earned no degree.[4]

The true story of Schultz's medical degree is probably to be found in the files of the Nor'Wester, a newspaper which Schultz later owned and published. The issue for June 1, 1861, announced the arrival of "Mr. Schultz", "lately from Canada". Two weeks later the same newspaper carried an advertisement concerning "Dr. Schultz, Physician and Surgeon."

Schultz somehow earned the distinction of being named in one of the earliest known statements of Métis aims, the one sent by W.R. Bown to Sir John A. Macdonald in mid-November of 1869:

> That Dr. Schultz and others shall be sent out of the territory forthwith.[5]

This was written by Bown on November 18, 1869, after the occupation of Fort Garry by the Métis National Committee but before the beginning of the Schultz houses incident. Clearly we must look more carefully at this man, for George Dugas, who knew him well, wrote that Schultz spoke French and got along well with the Métis in business matters.

Schultz used his association with Queen's and Victoria to good advantage in gaining acceptance at Red River, while making a living as a doctor and helping his half-brother to manage the Royal Hotel, the first hotel at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.[6] However, it is probable that the defining association of his life had little to do with those educational institutions and a great deal to do with business and government circles in Montreal and Ottawa. As early as August of 1862 the Nor'Wester, in an article discussing the shortage of doctors in the Settlement, noted the temporary absence of Schultz, who was away during the "past month or so" on a "business trip to Canada".[7] This was one of the first of many such trips which Schultz would make, trips which aroused the suspicions of many at Red River.

In early 1864 Schultz went into partnership with William Coldwell to manage the Nor'Wester, and an editorial welcomed the "new blood".[8] Under Coldwell's direction the Nor'Wester had been an opponent of the Hudson's Bay Company. Now, under the partnership, this opposition became even more pronounced, and some found it offensive. George Dugas wrote that in the Settlement itself the Nor'Wester was not taken too seriously, but its articles, read in distant parts, gave the impression that Red River people groaned under a hard "slavery".[9]

People who knew what the real situation was wished that something could be done about the Nor'Wester, and on occasion would have done something too, if it had not been for the moderating influence of Governor Mactavish.

That same year, 1864, the firm of McKenney and Company, made up of McKenney and Schultz, was dissolved.[10] Affairs, it seemed, were very complicated, and litigation seemed likely. In May of 1865 Schultz began an action before the General Quarterly Court claiming three hundred pounds sterling as the amount still due him before he would consent to the closing of the partnership accounts. The Court appointed a commission to investigate the business and to act as arbiters. The death of François Bruneau, a member of the Council of Assiniboia and one of the commissioners, delayed matters. The process was further delayed by the absence of McKenney. In May of 1866 the case was again entered, and Schultz declared that the Court "had permitted itself to be bullied and browbeaten" by McKenney and "had neither the will nor the power to do justice." When ordered to retract his statement he refused, and as a result of this several cases in which he was concerned went unheard, the Court having stated that until he retracted or apologized he could not be heard personally at the bar of the Court. Schultz then used the Nor'Wester to publish his own account of the affair, stating that it was yet another attempt on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company to crush an opponent in trade by refusing him judgment in the court.[11] Concern with this litigation did not prevent him from being absent from the Settlement for a considerable time, returning in early August.[12]

As always in affairs of this kind, opinion in the settlement was divided about what was going on. There were a few, particularly in the Lower Settlement, who saw Schultz as a kind of Red River Robin Hood in a valiant struggle against a Hudson's Bay Company Sheriff of Nottingham. Most people, however, looked askance at these goings-on and quietly made their

own decisions about Schultz's suitability for public office. This was shown when, in 1867, a vacancy occurred on the Council of Assiniboia. Schultz's name was mentioned, and a letter appeared in the Nor'Wester favoring his nomination. A petition was drawn up, signed and presented, along with an accompanying letter from Thomas Spence. The clerk of the Council stated in his reply that the petition had been forwarded to the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in England for consideration. He also stated that there was a counter petition from other inhabitants which was being forwarded to England as well.

Schultz was not appointed to the Council, and he used the columns of the Nor'Wester to inform his signers that their petition had been denied. He went on to inform them that, while he was now considered "obnoxious" by the members of the present Council, a time would come when a different state of affairs would permit "law-abiding subjects" to elect the person of their choice.[13] Schultz was accurate in his analysis of the situation. Bishop Taché, a member of the Council, later wrote that "many members would have resigned" had men "thus disposed been forced upon them as colleagues."[14]

Schultz married Agnes Farquharson in September of 1867.[15] A recent arrival in the Settlement, having come there to join her father,[16] Agnes had entered the convent so soon that people were hardly aware that "old Depravity's" daughter lived among them.[17] Her request for permission to remain in the convent after her marriage was not granted.[18]

Events of early 1868 left Schultz almost socially ostracized. Certain facts are needed in explanation. In February of 1867 the barrier against his personal appearance in Court had been removed, but Schultz had not brought his case forward again. In the meantime one of the most important creditors of the firm, Mr. Frederick Kew of London, acting through his representative John Inkster, began an action against Schultz, hoping to receive payment for his share of what

was owed to him by McKenney and Company. McKenney had paid his share. Schultz was absent from the Settlement at the time the case was heard, and judgment went against him. Mr. Inkster repeatedly asked Schultz to meet the judgment, but met with refusal. After waiting eight months Inkster resolved to enforce the payment.

On Friday, January 17, 1868, the sheriff, Mr. McKenney, with two constables, went to Schultz's store with the object of obtaining payment of the debt. McKenney, because of his personal interest in the case, asked his half-brother to settle peacefully with the creditor, but Schultz would not. McKenney then tried to seize certain of Schultz's goods, but, finding himself resisted, placed him under arrest. Roger Goulet, a Justice of the Peace, committed Schultz to prison.

About one o'clock Saturday morning fifteen persons, including Mrs. Schultz, forcibly entered the prison, overpowered the constables, broke open the door of Schultz's cell and released him.[19] A Nor'Wester "Extra" was soon published giving Schultz's view of the event, and a community which was scandalized by the event itself was horrified at the idea that the whole world would know about it through the columns of the Nor'Wester.[20]

No attempt was made to recapture Schultz. A meeting of the Council of Assiniboia was held and it was decided that one hundred special constables should be enrolled. The constables were enrolled, but were never used. Schultz made application for a new trial, and Governor Mactavish gave his approval. It was agreed by Inkster and Schultz that the decision of the jury should be final.[21]

In late February or very early March Schultz left on a trip to Canada. Governor Mactavish, having had certain representations made to him on behalf of Schultz, became security in a considerable sum for Schultz's personal appearance at the May trial.[22]

When the case came up at the Quarterly Court in May there was an astonishing development, which appeared to change completely the state of affairs. Herbert L. Sabine, a land surveyor who had been working for Schultz when Mr. Kew visited the Settlement in 1865, was Schultz's chief witness. Sabine swore before the court that he had been present when Schultz paid over to Kew the sum of two hundred seventy-five pounds. The only evidence of this transaction was to be the testimony of Sabine who saw it and heard the verbal agreement that the affair was to be kept "quiet". The money was to be paid on the debt but not marked on the notel[23]

Those who knew Mr. Kew, an accountant, could not believe their ears, but since he was in London, and as nobody in court had ever heard of the payment, the plaintiff's attorney was quite unprovided with evidence to rebut Sabine's statement. The jury brought in a verdict allowing Mr. Kew twenty-one pounds instead of the two hundred ninety-six claimed.

Governor Mactavish showed how much belief he had in the truth of Sabine's statement when he personally forwarded to Kew the sum of two hundred ninety-six pounds on his personal account. His action in allowing a new trial had, he believed, made him party to the perpetration of a fraud. As for Kew, he wrote a number of letters to individuals in the Settlement which supported the Governor's views. To clear his character from at least the stain of carelessness as an accountant he made a solemn statutory declaration before the Lord Mayor of London denying the truth of the facts as sworn by Sabine.[24]

Schultz withdrew from the management of the Nor'Wester in 1868, and Mr. Bown took his place. The announcement was made in the Nor'Wester for July 28, after Schultz's return from the second long absence of the year. Probably his interests were much too numerous and his absences too frequent for him to give the newspaper the attention it required. He had

interests in stores, herds of horses, the fur trade, and a new two-storey brick building was under construction.[25] As for the speculation about his long absences in Canada, those who indulged in it were soon to have what they saw as answers.

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[1] PLM Vertical file, "Sir John C. Schultz".
[2] Jocelyn McKillop's research, done for the Manitoba Historic Resources Branch, 1-2.
[3] Schofield, The Story of Manitoba, 5.
[4] PLM Vertical file, "Sir John C. Schultz", research by H.C. Knox, Tommy Tweed, Dr. Ross Mitchell.
[5] Macdonald Papers, Bown to Macdonald, Nov. 18, 1869.
[6] J.J. Hargrave, Red River (afterwards Hargrave), 200.
[7] Nor'Wester, Aug. 18, 1862.
[8] Nor'Wester, Mar. 3, 1864; Hargrave, 321-2.
[9] Dugas, Histoire Véridique des Faits Qui Ont Préparé le Mouvement des Métis à la Rivière Rouge en 1869 (afterwards Histoire), 3.
[10] Hargrave, 391-2.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Nor'Wester, Aug. 25, 1866.
[13] Hargrave, 411-2.
[14] Bishop Taché, "Sketch of the North-West of America", reproduced in the New Nation, Sept. 3, 1870.
[15] Nor'Wester, Sept. 21, 1867.
[16] Lyndel Meikle (ed), Very Close to Trouble: The Johnny Grant Memoir, 148-50.
[17] Lieutenant-governor Archibald recorded the fact that Farquharson was so referred to in the Settlement: PAC MG26A, Vol. 187, Archibald to Macdonald, September 25, 1872.
[18] PAM MG10 F5, Société Historique de St. Boniface, Bulletin No. 3, 4.
[19] Hargrave, 504-6.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Hargrave, 427.
[22] Hargrave, 428.
[23] Hargrave, 437-8. See also Hill, History of Manitoba, 199-208.
[24] Hargrave, 439.
[25] PAM MG12 E3 Box 16/19, Schultz Papers, letters 98, 99, 100, 103; Nor'Wester, July 28, 1868 and October 24, 1868.

Charles Mair, William McDougall and "Canada First"

Charles Mair reached the Red River Settlement on October 27, 1868. He and his companion and employer John Snow had made their way with eighteen tons of provisions along the trail from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Garry. Once arrived, they signed the register at "Dutch George" Emmerling's hotel. A day or so later they were invited to stay at the house of John C. Schultz and enjoy the "quiet and solid comfort of a home".[1]

Snow and Mair had been chosen by William McDougall to superintend the construction of a road from the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry on the route recommended some years earlier by S.J. Dawson. The ostensible purpose of this project was to provide employment "to the distressed population" of the Red River Settlement and to "alleviate their sufferings" brought on by an almost complete crop failure. The long-term objective was to make for better communications with the North-West through Canadian territory.[2]

In accordance with his instructions Snow and Mair called on Governor Mactavish of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were introduced to the Governor by John C. Schultz. Mactavish assured them that there was not the least objection to work beginning on the road.[3] This assurance was considered necessary because the Red River Settlement was not yet Canadian territory. In late October of 1868 Cartier and McDougall, if arrived in England, had no more than announced their desire to begin negotiations for the transfer of the North-West to Canada.

Historians have singled out this association of Snow and Mair with Schultz as pivotal in a study of the Insurrection. G.F.G. Stanley wrote of it as an "error". W.L. Morton called it a "blunder". Is this to suggest that if Snow and Mair had – say – stayed at Emmerling's there would have been no "mouvement" of the Métis? Or, alternatively, if Mair and Snow had made their arrangements with Bannatyne and Begg instead of with Schultz there would have been no

"mouvement"? Is it not an insult to Métis common sense to suggest that where the two men stayed or did business was a key factor in the events moving toward trouble? Surely an analysis of the events of the time depends rather on what Canadian government policy was or appeared to be. This was not known in October of 1868, not at least beyond the obvious fact that there was an intention to improve communications between Canada and the North-West. The presence of Snow and Mair was proof of that.

Charles Mair was born and raised at Lanark, Upper Canada, the youngest son of James Mair and Margaret Holmes who had immigrated from Scotland in 1831. The family was involved in the timber trade and in store businesses in Lanark and Perth. Charles attended school in Lanark and went on to high school in Perth. He then attended Queen's College in Kingston. A business depression forced him to postpone his education and return home to work in the family business. He was able to resume his studies at Queen's in 1867, and finished the first year of study towards a degree in medicine. During those intervening years he became interested in writing poetry and had a number of poems published in newspapers and magazines.[4]

In the spring of 1868 Mair went to Ottawa to arrange for the publication of his first major work "Dreamland". Soon after his arrival there he went to the Revere Hotel and called upon his close friend Henry J. Morgan, a civil servant and clerk in the office of the secretary of state. Morgan was also a writer, having several published books to his credit. The youthful biographer came to be the central personality around which a group of men gathered to talk and drink when business brought them to the raw new capital. One of these was George Taylor Denison, of Toronto, whose errand was to find himself a position in the militia department. To these new acquaintances and drinking companions Denison introduced a Toronto barrister William Foster. Foster had been the chief editorial writer for the financial newspaper the Monetary Times, and

had published a convincing argument for the need to renew the recently-cancelled Reciprocity Treaty. Another and older man shared Foster's interest in trade. Robert Haliburton, son of the Nova Scotia writer who created the literary figure "Sam Slick", was in Ottawa as a spokesman for the Cape Breton coal mining interests, which had suffered from the loss of the American market. Father Aeneas McDonell Dawson, the Roman Catholic chaplain to the British troops stationed in Ottawa, was drawn to the "Corner Room" group by his interest in Canadian literature, colonial questions and the North-West. He prepared a favorable review of Mair's "Dreamland" for the Ottawa press, and wrote a warm letter of introduction to Bishop Taché of St. Boniface on behalf of Mair.[5]

That spring of 1868 there was talk of how their new country was going to celebrate its birthday, if, indeed, it was going to celebrate it. Concern was expressed about the lack of a general enthusiasm for the new Confederation. To these men it seemed that the Canadian government had done little enough to acquaint the general public with the possibilities afforded by the union of British-American provinces. Only Thomas D'Arcy McGee appeared to have been able to catch and express a vision of the newer and greater Canada then coming into being. And McGee had just been assassinated on April 7 by some zealot who could not disentangle himself from the web of old hatreds imported to Canada from across the Atlantic ocean. Denison especially had been moved by the ideas of McGee, and had travelled from Toronto to Montreal to attend his funeral, finding himself one of a crowd of 80,000 mourners.

Who would take McGee's place?

A clear voice for a broad Canadianism, friendly to French Canada as well as to English Canada, was stilled in McGee's unfortunate death. Had McGee been able to visit Red River about the time Mair first went there he would have been inspired by what he saw, a society in

which people speaking English and French lived and worked amicably, whether on the long trails and rivers of the North-West or in the old Settlement at the "Forks". Now McGee was dead.

If there was no leading individual in sight could an organization arise to fill McGee's place? At a certain point this group of men began to speak of themselves as "Canada First", as a secret organization dedicated to overcoming the provincialisms of their fellow-countrymen and working for a broad Canadian national sentiment. This group of men, through a combination of circumstances that no one could have foreseen, exerted an influence in their country's affairs out of all proportion to their numbers and in a direction that all six would not likely have approved. We must learn how this happened.

Not long after McGee's death and about the same time that the six men began to meet regularly in the "Corner Room" an incident occurred which left Denison on bad terms with Sir George Cartier, the minister of militia. Denison was lobbying to have himself appointed assistant adjutant-general of cavalry. He had submitted an application accompanied by letters of recommendation from Colonel Wolseley, General Napier and others. As Denison later told the story in Soldiering in Canada, he called on Sir George, who told him to come and see him when the militia bill was passed. Denison promised to do so. When the bill became an act of Parliament Denison went to the House of Commons and sent in a note asking to be let know when Cartier could see him. What happened next probably cannot now be explained. Cartier may have had a difficult day in the House and saw in Denison just another of many who were importuning him for favors. Cartier left no papers and Denison may not have told the whole story, but let us hear his version of what happened next:

> He came out in the lobby, walked up to me in a very offensive manner and spoke to me so sharply and in such an overbearing and insolent manner that I very nearly struck him.

Denison told Cartier "curtly" that he did not wish to see him, turned away and left. He sent in his resignation of his commission in the militia and, when asked to reconsider, insisted on its acceptance. Before the year was out Denison had "lapsed into the position of a private in the second class of sedentary militia".[6] He had also become a bitter and implacable enemy of Sir George Cartier. This was to have serious consequences before much time had passed.

The course of Mair's life was changed at that time too. He had planned to return to his medical studies at Queen's in the fall. However, while he was in Ottawa he was introduced to William McDougall, then the minister of public works, by his friend Morgan. Morgan had worked in McDougall's office when the government was in Quebec some years earlier, and the two men knew each other well. McDougall had told Morgan that a visit to England was becoming a possibility, one that might see Canada negotiating for the transfer of the North-West to Canada. McDougall was only too aware of his own ignorance of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company's interests there, and was looking for someone to do research for him. Morgan called his attention to Mair, and saw to it that they became acquainted. McDougall liked Mair at once, and let him know that he, too, was a budding poet. Impressed with Mair's intelligence and patriotism, McDougall asked him to undertake some research for him. This work would involve "collecting and collating the authorities, the old treaties and others bearing upon the question" of the Hudson's Bay Company's rights. The material was in the Parliamentary Library, but would have to be sought out.

Mair completed the work to McDougall's satisfaction. A précis was prepared, the authoritative works on which it was based were packed for shipment to England, and Mair was

able to see the possibility of a return to his medical studies. However, McDougall asked him to accompany him to England as his secretary. Mair thought the matter over, weighed all the advantages and disadvantages, and told McDougall he would go with him.

Mair looked forward to this voyage to the centre of the Empire, and made plans for his part in it. Family matters, however, interfered with these plans. His sister Margaret fell seriously ill in St. Catharine's, and Mair went to her bedside. McDougall sent telegrams to Mair at Perth, and Mrs. Mair, expecting Charles at any moment, never opened them. McDougall then made other arrangements for a secretary. Mair eventually came and read the telegrams and reached Ottawa just as McDougall was leaving and spoke to him just long enough to be told what he was to do instead of going to England. His orders were to assume the office of accountant and paymaster on the Fort Garry road under the superintendence of Mr. Snow.[7] He was to go at once to St. Paul, Minnesota, and report to J. McDougall, who had charge of affairs concerning the road at that point. It was believed that Snow had already left for the North-West. Foster arranged with George Brown of the Globe that Mair should be that paper's North-West correspondent.

William McDougall sailed for England from Quebec City on October 3, and Mair left Ottawa by rail a few days later.[8] In sending reports to the Globe while on his way to the North-West Mair became the first of the "Corner Room" group to associate himself with the expansionist views of McDougall and Brown.

William McDougall was born near York – later Toronto – in 1822, and was raised on his father's farm in the township of Vaughan. He attended Victoria College at Cobourg. He studied law in the firm of Prince and Ewart, barristers-at-law, and when he wrote his Law Society examination finished second in a class of sixteen. In 1845 he married Amelia Caroline Easton.

A budding poet in secret, McDougall was for several years involved in the world of journalism, but he found himself drawn into politics. In 1850 he founded the semi-weekly North American. Long an associate of George Brown, he used this newspaper to promote the ideas of the Clear Grits, or radical wing of the Reform Party. In 1858 McDougall was elected member of the Legislative Assembly for North Oxford. He served as a member for North Ontario from 1863 to 1864, and for North Lanark from 1864 to 1867. He was commissioner of crown lands in the Macdonald-Sicotte and Macdonald-Dorion administrations between 1862 and 1864. He entered the Great Coalition in 1864 as provincial secretary, and was a delegate to each of the Charlottetown, Quebec and London Conferences. He was, therefore, a Father of Confederation. He did not follow Brown out of the Great Coalition in 1865. He was appointed minister of public works in Sir John A. Macdonald's first cabinet, and held this post until he was appointed lieutenant-governor of Manitoba in September of 1869.[9] In 1868 he went to England with Sir George Cartier to negotiate for the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canadian jurisdiction. While he was away in England his wife died at Ottawa in January of 1869.[10] Four of their nine children were still at home.

McDougall had long advocated Canadian expansion into the North-West, saying that "if we did not expand, we must contract." He looked forward to the negotiations themselves with eagerness. Hardly had these negotiations begun, however, when he was incapacitated by sickness, and the burden of the work fell on Sir George Cartier. The negotiations came to a successful close, and the transfer was to be effective on December 1, 1869.

A less determined and inflexible man would have looked upon his wife's death, his own illness and the need to arrange for care for his four children as good reason to take a rest from active politics. It is possible, of course, that he saw his suggested appointment as lieutenant-

governor of the new territory as equivalent to such a retirement. His understanding of the situation in the North-West may have been such that he viewed his new position as nothing more than a sinecure. At any rate he signified his willingness to act as the lieutenant-governor.

Times were hard at Red River. The 1860s had been drier than usual. Then in 1867 when swarms of grasshoppers invaded the country and laid their eggs people realized that they were probably in for a grasshopper infestation such as they had never seen before. They were not mistaken. The historian J.J. Hargrave, who was at Fort Garry at the time, wrote of the scene there after the young grasshoppers had "cleared the field of every vestige of vegetation" in the words that follow:

> Piled in heaps about the walls of Fort Garry, they were carted away and burned up to prevent the effluvia from their decaying bodies contaminating the atmosphere during the stifling heats of an unusually warm summer.[11]

George Dugas stated that the Settlement fields were as "naked as if a fire had ravaged all the country."

Early in August the Nor'Wester published an appeal for aid. Letters were written by leading citizens to newspapers including the Times in England, and these appeals brought forth a very considerable response, both from individuals and public bodies.

The Governor and Council of Assiniboia exerted themselves to the utmost of their ability. Funds were appropriated for the purchase of seed wheat and flour, which would have to be imported from the United States, as well as for twine, hooks and ammunition for those who wanted to try the local fisheries and hunt for game.

As the season advanced the situation worsened. The summer buffalo hunt was a failure as was the one in the fall. The lake fishery failed, and to cap the climax even the rabbit and pheasant population seemed to have entirely disappeared.

A Relief Committee, composed of the principal men of the colony, was set up to administer the management of the funds and the distribution of the provisions imported from the States. Much of this work at the parish level was done by the local clergy. The historian Begg stated that the work of this Relief Committee "gave general satisfaction to the public at large".[12] Carts hauling flour for distribution by this Relief Committee were still travelling to and from St. Paul when Snow and Mair arrived in the Settlement in late October.

The people of the Settlement extended a welcome to the two men, and Mair was not slow to tell his hosts of his success in the publication of poetry. The Nor'Wester for November 7, 1868, announced that "the young Canadian poet Charles Mair has been appointed paymaster for the road soon to be constructed from the Red River towards Lake Superior." The next issue noted Mair's "Dreamland". The same issue quoted John C. Schultz as reporting that active operations had commenced "on the Lake of the Woods road." The Canadian public works department's contribution to "Red River relief" had gone into effect.

Mair began writing letters to the Globe on his way through the United States. He continued to do this in the Red River Settlement. J.J. Hargrave reprinted some of these letters in Red River along with details as to when they began to be read at Red River. The letter of November 3, for example, made the long journey to Toronto, was published in the Globe, and was read by the Red River subscribers about the beginning of January, 1869. In this letter Mair described the Red River half-breeds as a "harmless obsequious set of men" who would, he judged, "be very useful here when the country gets filled up." It would be some time later in January, then, when Mair's remark about the "Dutchman's Hotel" from which he moved to Schultz's to avoid "the racket of a motley crowd of half-breeds, playing billiards and drinking," was read with annoyance by George Emmerling. It was written on November 19, 1868.

By the time he wrote this letter Mair had "received hospitalities to [his] heart's content, and...left the place thoroughly pleased with most that [he] had met." Mair went on:

> There are jealousies and heart-burnings, however. Many wealthy people are married to half-breed women who, having no coat of arms but a "totem" to look back to, make up for the deficiency by biting at the backs of their "white sisters". The white sisters fall back upon their whiteness, whilst the husbands meet each other with desperate courtesies and hospitalities, with a view to filthy lucre in the back ground.

This letter was too much for Anne Bannatyne, the wife of Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne, partner in trade with Alexander Begg. Anne and her husband had been at a party where Mair was an invited guest. Anne was a McDermot. Her sister Mary Sally and husband Governor Mactavish had been at the same party and so had other Red River people. Mair had insulted them all. Anne must do something about it.

The next scene in this Red River drama was described for posterity by George Dugas. The post office was in Bannatyne and Begg's store. Anne left orders with a clerk, Danny Mulligan, that he was to let her know when Mair next came in for his mail. One Saturday, about four in the afternoon when the store was full of people, Mulligan saw Mair come in, dropped what he was doing, and ran over to the house to warn Mrs. Bannatyne. Anne threw a shawl over her head – it was January – and arrived unexpectedly at the post office with a whip in her hand. She went up to Mair, took him by the nose with one hand, and gave his back-side a whipping with the other. "There," she said, "that's how Red River women treat those who insult them!" It was all over in half a minute. It was the first confrontation of the Red River affair.[13]

That was not the end of it. At least two of the husbands who had been present at the party were in the store, and they had a few things to say to the conceited young poet who had insulted Red River husbands.

Before night-fall the story was all through the Settlement!

There was a reaction to this same letter from the French-speaking community too, this time in written form. Published in Le Nouveau Monde, the letter signed "L.R." was not seen by Red River readers until late February or early March of 1869. It was probably written by Louis Riel, although by his own account he was not in the Settlement at the time. Probably what triggered his reply was Mair's statement that "the half-breeds are the only people here who are starving."[14]

Snow and Mair and a crew of men went out to Oak Point (Pointe du Chêne) and set up a headquarters there. First they rented a log house which was available. Later, using timber which was available not far away, they erected a large building which they called "Redpath house". It was a two-storey building, 27 by 40 feet. John Snow must have known that so long as he confined his activities to laying out a route and clearing a line for the road to Lake of the Woods he was acting within the limits imposed by Mactavish's verbal approval and the Canadian government's "relief" program. However, the lands at Oak Point looked richer and more easily cultivated than any he and Mair had ever seen at home in Ontario, and he was in frequent contact with a man – John C. Schultz – who was full of schemes for turning such lands into valuable real estate. It may be that Snow was influenced by suggestions from this man. Nothing can be proved, of course, but it is certain that Snow and Mair soon had to contend with angry Métis from the neighborhood.

Snow and Mair arranged with the Saulteaux for the purchase of a block of land several miles square, using as payment flour, pork and liquor. The Oak Point Métis thought that lands had been sold upon which they had a right of pre-emption. About the middle of February they forced Snow and Mair to leave the locality and go with them to Fort Garry. They wanted to

expel Mair from the Settlement as a person likely to cause mischief. Mair called upon Bishop Taché and asked him to interfere. He told Taché that he had asked the Métis to come with him, but the Métis had replied, "We know very well that His Lordship will prevail upon us to keep quiet, and yet we are so sure we are right that we will neither refuse His Lordship nor desist from the course which we have taken." Taché would not interfere.[15]

Mair had better luck when he went to Governor Mactavish. Mactavish persuaded the Métis to allow Mair to return to work. Snow, however, had to appear in court in March on a charge of selling liquor to Indians, and was convicted. A.G.B. Bannatyne stated when under oath that Snow was fined fifty dollars.[16]

Apparently Snow did not cease to attempt to purchase land, not, however, using alcohol. Once again he was taken to Mactavish by the Métis and was permitted to return to work on the understanding that he would confine himself to his work on the road. The Oak Point Métis then said, "If you content yourself with doing the work ordered by the government, not only will we not interfere with you any more, but will protect you against any one who may wish to interfere with you." Before the year was out the Métis were as good as their word, protecting Snow from his own Canadian employees.

This incident involving Oak Point lands was the second confrontation of the Red River affair. Both involved Mair, and would earn for him, a budding poet, a place in Riel's poetry.[17]

In February the Nor'Wester mentioned a movement among the people. It was rumored that a meeting was to be held in May. All sources agree that the people of the Settlement, especially the French-speaking parishes, were thoroughly aroused during the late winter and spring of 1869. Several factors contributed to this. The association of Schultz with the government road crews is one whose importance cannot be properly gauged. In the Oak Point

area, of course, Snow's and Mair's land-purchasing activities had brought into being a committee. One can only conjecture that Charles Nolin, Augustin Nolin, Damase Harrison and others were part of this. They probably had no intention of disbanding while Canadian road crews were in the vicinity. Another reason was that relief food supplies ran out in February and the people were forced, as a last resort, to try fishing through the ice of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Louis Schmidt has told how his memories of the winter fishery at Lake Athabasca now enabled him to show the people how this was done. There were plenty of fish in the rivers, and the people's success in this fishery brought them through a time when starvation stared them in the face.[18] This activity brought them together and made it easier to talk "politics". This meant that Canadian Confederation, its expansion and implications for the people of Red River were discussed thoroughly. Schmidt noted that some were happy about the prospect of being part of Canada. Others had their reservations about it or simply kept quiet.

They were not assisted in their discussions by the fact that no one – Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company or the British government – was providing any information to or asking any opinions of the Red River people.

As the season wore on the news came that the negotiations in London had been completed. In June the Nor'Wester mentioned McDougall's name in connection with the lieutenant-governorship of the new territory, commenting that the appointment "could not fall into better hands."[19] Many in the French-speaking and Catholic parishes were not so sure. The name was familiar enough to many in St. Boniface. It was even to be found in the new set of newspaper résumés begun after the cathedral fire of 1860, so recently was it in the news.[20]

In 1862 McDougall was commissioner of crown lands in the J.S. Macdonald-Sicotte government. Manitoulin Island had been opened up for settlement that year, in a reversal of

policy which was a "cause célèbre" at the time and left a legacy of bitterness and resentment. Prior to 1862 two policies were being considered with regard to the Indians of Manitoulin Island. One, the government policy, would try to turn the Indians quickly into agriculturalists and assimilate them into the larger society. The other, more conservative, would permit the Indians to adapt gradually to the ways of the Europeans while continuing certain aspects of the old way of life. The failure of the first policy and the need for land for the sons of Ontario farmers persuaded McDougall that the entire island should be thrown open for settlement. This brought him into conflict with Roman Catholic priests Father Jean-Pierre Choné and Father Auguste Kohler who were working patiently in the interests of the Indians. Certain newspapers were prone to refer to the affair as an "Indian rebellion", to see Jesuit and American influence at work in some sort of conspiracy against the Canadian government.[21] Many at Red River wondered how McDougall would act if any situation developed involving old Red River settlers on one hand and Ontario immigrants on the other.

There was no doubting the attitude of the Ontario immigrants where the people of the Red River Settlement were concerned. One had only to use one or other of Winnipeg's saloons as an observation post – as Louis Riel often did in the summer and fall of 1869 – to hear the suggested fate of the "Half-breeds" given by chapter and verse. A glorious future was possible in a land of such fertile soil. All that was necessary was an immigration of the "right kind" of people – of people with "pluck", who had the necessary "get up and go", and this would be a land flowing with milk and honey. Of course, the present population would have to "give way"[22] if this desirable future was to become a reality. Where the present population was to go and what it was to do when it arrived was never made explicit, although hints involving the Rocky Mountains were dropped from time to time. The men would make good "hewers of wood and

drawers of water" and the women – well – the women were good-looking, often startlingly so, and good use could be made of them.

In at least one recorded case the word was made flesh. In the late summer or early fall of 1869 a crew of Canadians employed by John Snow near Oak Point had a bright idea and put it into effect. They had observed that a certain cluster of houses seemed to be inhabited by women and children only. The men must be away working somewhere unless the women were all young widows. What the idea involved became a part of Métis folk-lore:

> During the summer of 1869 Scott and about ten of his companions, who had come like him from Ontario, spent several days in an incredible binge at Oak Point. When night came they went to houses where men were absent, frightening the women and children by the disorder of their conduct. They took over the houses and, while guarding the doors and windows to prevent the women and children from fleeing and warning neighbors, danced as many hours as they pleased.[23]

This incident was so shocking and so shameful that those involved could hardly bring themselves to tell others about it, but it provided the National Committee with willing volunteers in October.

Still another, but delayed, reaction to Mair's letters and behavior was a major work of Alexander Begg's, "Dot It Down". This was a story about a boisterous and conceited young fellow who was always "dotting down" notes about the new country he was in. Fittingly enough, he dedicated it to Mr. and Mrs. Bannatyne. It was published in 1871.[24]

"Dot It Down" is not great literature, although it is probably the first historical novel written in the North-West. Its chief value for us here lies neither in its plot nor its narrative, but rather in the quite recognizable portraits of Red River people Begg has drawn. For example, Enos Stutsman, the American speculator and annexationist, known in the book as "Mr. Shorthorn", is described as follows:

> Possessed of sharp, shrewd, intelligent features, and a body stout and well-formed; his arms were marvels of strength, but he was almost without legs, having only a couple of stumps in their place, the longest of which being not over a foot and a half in length. He was born with this deformity. In moving about he used a couple of short crutches, and it was astonishing with what rapidity he could limp along on them.[25]

"Mr. Bon" is easily recognized as Bannatyne, and "Mr. Twaddle" is Bown, the editor of the Nor'Wester, which featured articles and editorials abusing the Hudson's Bay Company:

> The Buster was, in fact, the organ of a few ambitious intriguing men of the settlement, such as Cool, who, while working for a change of government, calculated upon a large benefit to themselves personally, without taking into account the welfare and condition of the settlers at all.

"Cool" is a businessman who appears to be perpetually in debt and having trouble with his accounts. It is impossible not to see in him a portrait of John C. Schultz who, like the others mentioned above, had been in Begg's circle of acquaintance for many years. Here and there in the course of the story "Cool" has things to say about the Half-breed people of Red River. In a conversation with someone called "Whirl" he philosophizes as follows:

> The half-breeds are bound to give place to new people coming into the country; like the Indians, they will have to fall back on the approach of a more civilized state of society.

In another discussion with "Whirl" we find him assuring his friend that

> We don't want Canadians and half-breeds to go together; one must fall behind; and if I can help to do it, the people here must be the ones to give way.

And in a conversation which took place in the course of arranging a deal to use "a little rum and a few pounds of pork and flour" to buy land from the Indians, "Cool" overcame the objections of "Sharp" – or John Snow – by using the words, "Pshaw! The Canadian Government will listen to our claims before those of the half-breeds, depend upon it." Begg's account of how "Cool, 'Dot'

Sharp and Co." were caught and taken to court for selling liquor to the Indians sounds more like history than a passage from a novel.[26]

John C. Schultz was in the habit of leaving the Settlement at least twice a year on long trips to either St. Paul or Canada or both. When he made his first trip of the 1869 season he called on Denison in Toronto and was enrolled in the group later to be known as "Canada First". "Haliburton happened to be in Toronto at the time," Denison later wrote; "I introduced Schultz to him and to W.A. Foster, and we warmly welcomed him into our ranks. He was the sixth member."[27]

Actually Schultz was the seventh member. Here Denison was trying to consign to oblivion Father Dawson, a man who, had he remained a member, could have helped make of "Canada First" an organization with a much broader view. Denison was also hiding a metamorphosis in "Canada First" which took place during the winter of 1868-1869. With the loss of Dawson and the addition of Schultz the orientation of the group narrowed and its name could sensibly have been changed to "Ontario First". This new orientation came into sharp focus within less than a year.

It is well known that Métis suspicions with regard to Canada's intentions found expression in action shortly after the arrival of J.S. Dennis, and the surveyors proved beyond doubt that those intentions had to do primarily with land. One of the first of the acts of the National Committee prevented William McDougall from assuming his responsibilities, and we cannot know how successful he would have been if he had been allowed to enter the Settlement and implement Canadian policy. It is possible, however, to gain a hint of the nature of the proposed regime. In May of 1870, when the Manitoba bill was before Parliament, McDougall prepared and publicized a bill of his own by means of publication in the Globe.[28] It is probable

that in the provisions of McDougall's bill we can see the sort of proposal that would have been placed before Parliament if there had been no Insurrection at Red River.

The bill had 23 sections, and provided for a territorial system of government. A lieutenant-governor was to be advised by a council of not more than 15 persons nor less than seven. A district of Assiniboine was to be created, encompassing all of present-day Manitoba south of a line through the 52nd parallel of latitude, and between the Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg river and Lake Winnipeg on the east, and a north-south line drawn through present-day Melville and Estevan, Saskatchewan, on the west. This area was to be divided into 24 electoral districts. Each white or Métis male British subject over the age of 21 was to have the right to vote. Members of the House of Assembly were to be over 21 years of age and have the ability to write either English or French. The legislature was to have power to make laws concerning the following: the rules and procedures of the House; public schools, roads and bridges; licenses; levying of taxes; companies; law enforcement; all purposes of a municipal, local or private nature; and "the management and sale of school lands, and such other lands as may from time to time be placed under the control of the Lieutenant-Governor and the House of Assembly".

Section 19 provided that "the survey, management and disposition of lands in the North-West Territories, and in the said district, except school lands and such other lands as may be placed under the control of the Lieutenant-Governor and the House of Assembly, shall be under the direction and at the expense of the Government of the Dominion".

It would be interesting to attempt to speculate on the kind of reception this bill would have received from the politically self-conscious people who were to prevent McDougall from assuming office and go on to make the Insurrection of 1869-1870!

[1] Norman Shrive, Charles Mair: Literary Nationalist, (Afterwards Shrive), 59.
[2] Begg, Creation, 16-7; Begg's Journal, 155.
[3] PAC Department of Public Works, Register of Correspondence, Vol. 264, Snow to McDougall, Feb. 8, 1869.
[4] Shrive, 19.
[5] Carl Berger, The Sense of Power, 49-51.
[6] Denison, Soldiering in Canada, 170-3.
[7] Shrive, 54-5.
[8] Shrive, 56.
[9] Guide to Canadian Ministries Since Confederation: July 1, 1867 – April 1, 1973, 5.
[10] Nor'Wester, Feb. 5, 1869.
[11] J.J. Hargrave, Red River, 446.
[12] Begg, Creation of Manitoba (afterwards Creation), 13.
[13] Begg's Journal, 395; Dugas, Histoire, 27-8.
[14] Begg's Journal, 399-402.
[15] Dom Benoit, La Vie de Mgr. Taché, Vol. 2, 9.
[16] "Report...1874", Bannatyne's deposition, 123.
[17] Collected Writings of Louis Riel (afterwards Writings – Riel), Vol. 4, 040.
[18] Begg's Journal, "Memoirs of Louis Schmidt, Secretary of the First Provisional Government", Chapter 5, 1868-70, 458-460. Donatien Frémont, Les Sécrétaires de Louis Riel, Chantecler, 1953, 25.
[19] Nor'Wester, June 26, 1869.
[20] For example, Globe, Aug. 22, 1863, where the phrase "deprive the poor Indians of the Manitoulin of their property and rights" was used. For the résumés see Frémont, op. cit., 21-2.
[21] For a good study of the matter see Douglas Leighton, "The Manitoulin Island Incident of 1863: An Indian-White Confrontation in the Province of Canada" in Ontario History, June 1977, 113-124.
[22] Begg, Dot it Down, 107. Compare with Begg, Creation, 21 and with Riel's statement in Le Métis, Feb. 28, 1874, in "L'Amnistie".
[23] Le Métis, avril, 1874. Louis Riel's reply to Dr. Lynch's allegations.
[24] Alexander Begg, "Dot It Down", Toronto Reprint Library of Canadian Prose and Poetry, University of Toronto Press, 1978. This is a reprint of the original, which is very difficult to obtain.
[25] Begg, "Dot It Down", 88. Compare this with Dale Gibson, Attorney For The Frontier, University of Manitoba Press, 1983, Prologue.
[26] Compare with Begg's Journal, 156; Hargrave, Red River, 458-9, Begg, Creation, 124-6.
[27] Denison, The Struggle For Imperial Unity, 15.
[28] The Globe, May 6, 1870.

Governor Mactavish Makes a Choice

If William Mactavish[1] is remembered at all by Canadian students and historians it is as the rather ineffectual Hudson's Bay Company Governor of Rupert's Land who was ill during the Red River Insurrection, and whose illness contributed to its success. It was perhaps inevitable that such an opinion should come to be held, but it is not at all certain that this is the correct interpretation to place on events. Mactavish was accused of favoring the annexation of Rupert's Land to the United States. He was also accused by Schultz of being a puller of strings behind the Métis movement. It may be that we shall never know all the facts about what happened, for Mactavish died in Britain in July of 1870,[2] before he had a chance to prepare his memoirs. Nevertheless it is difficult to envisage what other course Mactavish could have followed in the Insurrection, given the circumstances of the time.

William Mactavish was born in Scotland, the son of Dugald Mactavish and Letitia Lockhart. He came to Rupert's Land in 1833 as a clerk in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was stationed at Norway House, York Factory, Fort Garry and Sault Ste. Marie. He was promoted to chief trader in 1837, and to chief factor in 1851. He was Governor of Assiniboia from 1858 until the transfer in June of 1870, and after 1864 also held the office of Governor of Rupert's Land. By his marriage to Sarah McDermot he had a least one son. He was a brother-in-law of A.G.B. Bannatyne, the Winnipeg trader, who married Annie McDermot.[3]

Mactavish's personal influence and prestige were great, the result of many years of honorable and considerate dealing with the people of the North-West.[4] His apparent lack of ability to influence events in late 1869 and early 1870 arose from changes in the nature of the Company made after 1863, when the International Finance Society[5] - the financial backers of Sir Edward Watkin – bought the Company.[6] Suddenly the employees found that the focus of

activities had changed. What was worse, however, was the decline in morale among the various ranks of Company people. As Isaac Cowie put it, the Company officials had acted "stealthily",[7] and the old hands no longer felt the same about it. Then, too, the Company administration was defective in that it had no military or police organization to enforce its laws.[8] With the departure of the Royal Canadian Rifles in 1861[9] the government of Assiniboia had no force but moral suasion to back its authority. Luckily, most of the time this was enough, since most of the people were law-abiding. However, when it was faced with a challenge, as in the Corbett affair of 1863, the St. Andrew's Day riot of 1867,[10] or in the jail-breaking of January, 1868,[11] when John C. Schultz was released from jail by a mob, it was unable to act quickly or adequately. As it turned out, it was easy enough to raise a force of special constables – three hundred came forward at the call of the Council of Assiniboia[12] - but the force was not used, since the crisis was by then deemed to be over.[13] These special constables had been chiefly French-speaking Half-breeds.[14]

Then in early 1869 came the news of the agreement to "sell" Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory. People felt that they had been "sold".[15] The factors of the Company felt that they had been betrayed, since they were not to share in the three hundred thousand pounds paid to the Company.[16] The biographer of Donald A. Smith has recounted how William Mactavish paid Smith a visit, and with "alarm on his face and a grievance in his bosom" asked for the truth about the transaction.[17] Mactavish had been in Britain, and visited Smith on his way back to Red River.

Mactavish had reason to be embittered, hurt and angry at three separate levels. As a person he had been "sold". As an officer of the Company he was not to share in the three hundred thousand pounds. Then as Governor he received another blow in the summer of 1869.

It was revealed that under the "Rupert's Land Act" – recently passed by the Government of Canada – he was specifically excepted from any part in the direction of the new order of things while all those who had been serving under him were to continue in office.[18] As time passed it became known that William McDougall was to be Lieutenant-Governor. Mactavish must have wondered if he was to be offered some subordinate position, but no such request seems ever to have come from McDougall. All this was galling enough, but there was worse.

Mactavish had been astonished in early October of 1868, when he was called on by the superintendent of the Lake of the Woods road, John Snow, in company with his paymaster, Charles Mair and – of all people – John C. Schultz! Snow asked Mactavish if he had any objection to the opening of a road. Mactavish answered "Not the least", but "hoped [Snow] would make a good one".[19] If Mactavish had private misgivings at this indication that Schultz had been selected as some kind of government agent they were amply justified four months later when Snow and company were taken to court in February for trading liquor to the Indians in what appeared to be land transactions.

From then on it seemed that all reports concerning Canadians were bad, and all, except this one about the week-end binge at Oak Point, had to do with land. The Canadians had not even the decency to be subtle about their desire for land. Settlement people could not understand why these people wanted Settlement land. Almost all of them, in coming to Red River, had travelled past hundreds of miles of unoccupied lands in Minnesota that were equally good.[20] Why did they insist on coming as far away from a railway as Oak Point or Portage la Prairie, where there probably would not be rail service for years? Were they real estate speculators at heart?

One of the worst reports about Canadians involved Schultz and Mair and their meddling with the Indians near Portage la Prairie in what amounted to a challenge, not just to Mactavish's authority, but to that of the coming Canadian administration. Schultz and Mair met with the Indians near Portage la Prairie and had a great deal too much to say to them, considering that they had no legal authority to say anything.[21] Mactavish was immediately under pressure to take appropriate action, so he contacted James McKay and asked him to go to the Portage and try to repair any damage that Schultz and Mair might have done with the Indians. Mactavish reminded McKay that no one had authority to make any agreement with the Indians concerning what they regarded as their lands. Could McKay get from them a short-term agreement not to interfere with the Canadians now squatting in that area? Mactavish was "on the eve" of a trip to Norway House and could not make this Portage trip himself.[22] Mactavish knew that McKay could be trusted to say no more than was necessary while attempting to persuade the Indians not to molest the Canadians. Mactavish could not blame the Indians for being upset, since he was upset too. The Canadians had ploughed furrows marking off huge squares of land by way of laying claim to them.[23]

It was common knowledge that the Canadians of the work party sent to build the Lake of the Woods road had staked out claims in the spring of 1869. It was not at all clear whether this activity was related to the liquor-selling incident. However, there was certainly no doubt about the time and place of the incident between Fort Garry and Winnipeg. In July a group of Canadians and others who should have known better began staking claims on the "common" between the Fort and the village, traditionally an area where the Indians could camp when they visited the Settlement. It is not clear what happened. Possibly those who were running lines

across the "common" disturbed some Indians in the process. At any rate, the Nor'Wester published some indignant editorials on the subject.

The officer at Fort Garry, Dr. Cowan, caused a process to be served upon each of the claimants, warning them that their proceedings were unlawful and that they must at once desist.[24] James Stewart, of St. James, one of those served with a process, was one of those who had been involved in the jail-breaking of 1863.[25] Mactavish did not like the looks of this, and he knew there were many others who would feel the same about it.

Mactavish knew that something was stirring among the Métis. This was to be expected, since the Canadians were telling them that they would be driven away to the Rocky Mountains when the new order came to Red River.[26] And Schultz was not helping things by saying that he would be sheriff under that new order.[27] A dangerous situation was developing, and Mactavish's old friend Bishop Taché, one of the most influential people in the French-speaking community, was away in Quebec. Mactavish wrote to Taché, saying that he had never seen the people here "in the restless, excited state they are now." The people, he told Taché, were suspicious about the connection there appeared to be between Schultz and officials like Snow, of the Lake of the Woods party, and Dennis, of the survey party, more recently arrived. He had told the people, he said, that Schultz had simply been "kind and accommodating", but found that their suspicions remained. Mactavish saw trouble ahead if McDougall were to come in and appoint Schultz to some position or other – sheriff would certainly be the worst of all possibilities.

Mactavish suggested to Taché that it would be wise for him to be in Red River when the "new order of things" was instituted.[28] When Taché received Mactavish's letter he did everything he could to have Mactavish's views brought to the attention of Sir George Cartier, even though he had previously been spoken to so harshly by Sir George that he could not bring

himself to approach him again. A reply came indirectly to the effect that Cartier and his colleagues "knew all about it" and had made provisions respecting matters. Very soon the newspapers announced that "a certain number of rifles and a certain quantity of ammunition would be sent to Fort Garry with Mr. McDougall." When this news reached Red River the excitement became more intense, especially since the Canadian party was boasting that upon McDougall's arrival they would "take up arms and drive out the half-breeds [sic]".[29] As for Taché, he did not return to Red River as Mactavish hoped, but began his long journey to Rome to take part in the Vatican Council of 1870.[30]

There was no let-up in the tension and anxiety of the summer and fall of 1869. Mactavish found himself feeling strangely tired of having to reassure people that they need not be worried about Schultz and the Canadians and that all would turn out well. It was not long before he realized that there was more than the fatigue of office. People began to remark that their Governor Mactavish did not appear to be well.[31]

Something was indeed stirring in the Métis parishes. It had no focus at first and there appeared to be no leadership. It was certain that the Métis were going to have to "circle the carts", but were not at all certain how this was to be done. Men like André Nault vividly remembered how the Métis had had to organize in 1849 to force the Hudson's Bay Company to acknowledge the use of French in the courts of Assiniboia.[32] Louis Riel, Sr., had led that fight along with the battle over trade in the Sayer trial. But everything was different this time. A public meeting held in July of 1869 did not have any positive result, and the councillor Pascal Breland went out of his way to dissociate himself from the calling of it.[33] He and Solomon Hamelin then thought it wise to absent themselves from the Settlement altogether while Métis unease continued to increase.[34]

Louis Riel, Jr., had returned to the Settlement in 1868. Murdoch McLeod said that when he first saw him Riel was just a bar-room loafer, haunting the several saloons to be found in Winnipeg, and drew the obvious inference.[35] Riel, however, was doing the basic reconnaissance on which he ultimately based the need for a Métis movement. Emmerling's was the best place to hear the most recently-arrived Canadians,[36] and what he heard forced him to agree that his people were going to have to "circle the carts". But how was that to be done?

The Métis knew that their sovereignty as a people on the prairies depended in the last analysis on their ability to act as soldiers in a crisis. They could do so because plans had been made before they left on a hunt: a leader had been chosen, captains had been elected, a set of regulations had been drawn up and accepted by all.[37] This was all very well on the prairies. But what about here in the Settlement? As the Métis saw it the Settlement was menaced by Canadians. Behind Canada, and at a great distance, was England and the Queen. How could they oppose Canada without appearing to be disloyal to the Queen? The same clergy who had taught the Métis to organize – to hold meetings, choose a chairman, make decisions, keep minutes – had also taught them that when the chips were down their supreme leader and protector in matters temporal was the Queen. Nothing they did must be in opposition to the Queen's authority.[38] This consideration was uppermost in the minds of all in the Settlement as they strove to decide what to do in the face of the menace hinted at by the young Canadians who drank and boasted in Emmerling's saloon in late 1869. Meanwhile the people watched and listened and wondered what they could do.

The Métis had seen surveyors before. Men like Herbert L. Sabine had been in the Settlement for years, now and then running survey lines where a dispute had to be settled or where a new river lot was to be laid out.[39] However, with the beginning of the activities of

Dennis and his survey parties, unease and suspicion turned to mystification. Dennis and his parties did not seem to be interested in the river lots. When questioned, Dennis was at some pains to assure the people that they need fear nothing. He was not interested in the old survey. Riel went to see him about the first of October to obtain some verification of what others had said. Dennis later testified under oath to the Select Committee of 1874 about the conversation which followed. Dennis said that Riel appeared to be "pleased and satisfied" and said it would be his duty and pleasure to make Dennis's intentions known to the people.[40]

Dennis complained that Riel did not keep the promise about making Dennis's intentions known to the people, but he was probably mistaken in this. Dennis had – without knowing it – cleared up a matter which had caused the Métis endless puzzlement. They had watched every move of the surveyors and had compared notes. If Dennis had followed his original plan – to retrace the existing land holdings as given in the Company's "Register B" – it is likely that no suspicions would have been aroused. However, Dennis noticed that much of the land was in crop and decided that it would be unwise to begin the kind of work at that time. Accordingly he began the surveys needed to establish the principal governing line known as the Winnipeg Meridian. This work involved locating the 49th parallel accurately, and was begun on September 8. He found that the previous survey had placed the International Boundary about two hundred feet south of that parallel. He then surveyed the Winnipeg Meridian north toward the Assiniboine river, being careful not to encroach on the two-mile strip on either side of the Red.

By this time Mr. Webb had arrived in the Settlement, and Dennis organized a survey party to work under Webb's direction running the governing line between townships six and seven[41] east of the Meridian over to Oak Point. Webb went to the area and began survey operations on October 6. Work went on over unoccupied prairie during the following days, the

crew taking a rest on Sunday, October 10. On the 11th the party resumed work until they were "stopped by Half Breeds" [sic] and "found it impossible to proceed farther". The surveyors had reached the outer limit of the hay privilege in the parish of St. Vital.[42]

Webb and party returned to camp and sent a report to Colonel Dennis with W.A. Farmer. Dennis immediately met with Dr. Cowan, the chief magistrate in the Settlement. Cowan did not wish to bother Governor Mactavish, because of the state of his health, so he sent for another magistrate, Mr. Goulet, and consulted with him. Riel happened to come into the Fort at this time, so Cowan sent for him and advised him of the complaint filed by Colonel Dennis. Riel told Cowan that the surveyors had no right to survey, and really had no right in the country whatever. Cowan explained that the surveys could do the people no harm, and that the survey was quite legal, since the Company had consented to it. Riel said that he would think about it and advise them of his decision the next day. When Riel called the next day Cowan took him to see Governor Mactavish, who spent two or three hours discussing the whole matter with him. Mactavish attempted to persuade Riel that he was acting illegally, and that the survey would not in any way affect the lands or rights of the Métis people. Riel, however, was adamant. He said the people would not alter the stand they had taken. He said if they were sent to jail they were quite ready to go.[43] It is likely that in this conversation Mactavish learned of the rationale behind the Métis resistance to the surveys.[44]

The Métis had seen through the Canadian game. They saw too that Cowan and Mactavish were simply embarrassed that unpleasantness was threatening and were trying to avoid the appearance of trouble.

Most land surveys have been made after a long period of occupation and consultation with the people concerned. One could say that most kinds of survey simply confirmed what

traditional usage had decreed. The river lot survey of the Red River Settlement – like that of the St. Lawrence valley and similar surveys in Europe – admirably suited the kind of land usage which was customary with the people. The Métis had watched the Canadian surveyors and knew that they were not seeking to verify the old survey. They had spent almost all their time running lines over the unoccupied lands which lay at some distance from the two rivers.[45] The Métis knew that to impose a survey before occupying the land is to make a decision concerning land holding and settlement which will affect a people for centuries. Riel and his committee saw that a decision had been made about a "new system of survey"[46] – to use Riel's own words – and that they had not been consulted. They knew intuitively that if they were ever going to be consulted – and if, in their opinion, a mistake was to be corrected – it would have to be now. Hence the stopping of Webb's survey.

As Riel outlined it to Mactavish, it was easier to "keep the wolf out of the cattle barn than it would be to put the wolf out after he had come in." For the Métis, Canada was the wolf. The Métis were determined to keep Canada out of the Settlement where it had no right to be. "We are loyal subjects of Her Majesty," said Riel, "but we absolutely refuse to recognize the authority of Canada here."[47] The problem was how to do what had to be done without laying themselves open to accusations of disloyalty and treason. Riel thought that this could be done. He had lived in Lower Canada for eight years, practically becoming a Canadian in the process, and had studied English and Canadian history. He knew that Sir George Cartier had taken part in the rebellion of 1837, had been amnestied and was now a leading member of Sir John A. Macdonald's cabinet.[48] However, the Métis were not going to rebel against an established order. They were going to prevent an alien one from being established and then take part in the discussions leading to the founding of a new order. They had decided to resist.

The Métis realized that Mactavish was in a difficult position. He was not, they said, "between two fires", but rather between three – even four – fires. The fires could be identified as the Canadian government, the Schultz party, the Red River settlers, and the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company.[49] They knew that Mactavish must at all times appear to be the Company's devoted servant. He could not allow himself to appear to be in favor of the Métis movement, even if he was.[50]

Events moved quickly in the next few days, days in which Mactavish and Cowan were constantly being forced to assess the strengths of the various elements in the Settlement in an effort to decide what to do. Several meetings were held among the Métis which resulted in the formation of a National Committee, headed by John Bruce as president and Louis Riel as secretary.[51] On October 17, acting under instructions from the National Committee, a group of Métis placed a barrier across the road at St. Norbert in order to prevent any stranger from entering the Settlement without being challenged. News came that McDougall was on his way from Canada and would reach Pembina in not many days. He was bringing with him a quantity of rifles, it was reported, in order to arm his partisans in case of trouble. Riel and several of his councillors went to St. Norbert to discuss this latest development with Fathers Ritchot and Dugas. The outcome of the conference was a short note to McDougall, ordering him not to enter the "territory of the North West" without the "special permission" of the National Committee.[52]

On October 22 Walton F. Hyman, who had been for several months at St. Norbert, ostensibly as a tanner but secretly as a spy, went in to Fort Garry and made a deposition to Magistrate Cowan concerning the concentration of armed men at St. Norbert.[53] The publication of the deposition was taken by the Métis as a sign that the secret organization among the Canadians was now ready to act. It is more likely that Hyman and his fellows hoped to use this

means to force the Hudson's Bay Company to accept an armed guard of volunteers from the Canadian party. Cowan's failure to proceed thus was long afterwards cited by the Canadian party as proof of the complicity of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Métis movement. That, however, was not the way things really stood, and the behavior of Cowan and Mactavish in the following days is proof of this.

Cowan and Mactavish both knew that they could not raise a body of men to force the men gathered at St. Norbert to disperse or do anything else. Neither man wished to plunge the Settlement into any kind of civil strife in which the Fort might be destroyed. The response they decided upon was to summon Riel and Bruce to attend a session of the Council of Assiniboia on October 25, in hopes of persuading the two men to have their force disperse.[54]

In the illness of Mactavish Judge John Black acted as chairman. He expressed the Council's hopes that the rumors he had heard concerning plans to prevent Mr. McDougall from entering the Settlement were untrue. It did not take Riel long to undeceive the Council on this point. The Métis were, Riel said, "perfectly satisfied with the present government and wanted no other"; they "objected to any government coming from Canada without their being consulted in the matter"; they "would never admit any Governor no matter by whom he might be appointed, if not by the Hudson's Bay Company, unless Delegates were previously sent, with whom they might negotiate as to the terms and conditions under which they would acknowledge him"; they realized that they were "uneducated and only half civilized and felt that if a large immigration were to take place they would probably be crowded out of a country which they claimed as their own"; they believed they were acting "not only for their own good, but for the good of the whole Settlement"; they did not feel that they were breaking any law, but were "simply acting in defence of their own liberty"; they "did not anticipate any opposition from their English-

speaking countrymen, and only wished them to join and aid in securing their common rights". They were, Riel announced, "determined to prevent Mr. McDougall from coming into the Settlement at all hazards."[55]

The Council members did their best to persuade Riel that his ideas were "erroneous", and that his course of action would be attended with "disastrous consequences" to the Settlement generally. Riel was not persuaded. He promised, however, to tell his supporters what the members of the Council had said.

After Riel and Bruce had gone, the Council discussed what course of action they should follow. They had no military force at their disposal. At last, on the suggestion of A.G.B. Bannatyne, it was decided to ask William Dease and Roger Goulet "to collect immediately as many of the more respectable of the French community as they could and with them proceed to the camp of the party who intend to intercept Governor McDougall and endeavour if possible to procure their peaceable dispersion."

It would appear that, while Dease did his best, using money and argument to purchase support, Goulet decided not to press matters. When the two groups met at St. Norbert there was no doubt as to which was stronger. When the Council of Assiniboia reconvened on October 30, Judge Black reported that "Mr. Dease's mission had entirely failed in producing the desired result".[56] There was nothing more the Council could do. It adjourned, and never met again until it was time to welcome the first Lieutenant-governor of the province of Manitoba.

The Council had met on Saturday, October 30. On Saturday night and Sunday Cowan and Mactavish talked over what had been said at the two Council meetings and what the Settlement's state of affairs was. There were signs of support for McDougall in the English parishes, where meetings had been held and addresses of welcome prepared.[57] Most ominous,

however, was the activity in the Canadian party. Cowan reported that a Canadian named Scott had been taking around a subscription list and collecting money for a fund for a celebration to welcome McDougall.[58] His chief support was at Garratt House, where many of the newcomers were staying.[59] Cowan remarked that, except for the Métis gathered at St. Norbert, those staying at Garratt's were the largest concentration of men in the Settlement.

On Monday Mactavish was visited by two men from Kildonan, William Fraser and John Sutherland.[60] Fraser and Sutherland wanted to know the Governor's feelings "with regard to the insurrectionary movement" and suggested that he call out a "sufficient number of loyal men to prevent the rebels from taking [the Fort]". It would not be hard, they said, to find a body of loyal men willing to defend the Fort. Mactavish had been caught by surprise by the visit of the two men, and found himself having to be very careful in his choice of words as he expressed himself as being against such a suggestion. Fraser and Sutherland were dissatisfied with his reply and rose to leave. Just before they left Fraser said to the Governor, "Don't be surprised if the English people take [the] Fort by force to protect it." Mactavish jumped to his feet and said, "If there is nobody else that will do it, I will shoot the first man that will come inside the gate myself."[61]

Mactavish realized that there was no time to lose if he was to act responsibly and save the Settlement – and the Fort – from violence. Other men were assessing the situation in the Settlement, just as he and Cowan were. Not all of these men were as responsible as he believed Sutherland and Fraser to be. He wondered if Schultz was somewhere behind this last move. Mactavish noticed Romain Nault, a young Métis, in the courtyard of the Fort, and spoke to him, saying, "What is Louis Riel doing? Why does he not act?" Mactavish left nothing to chance, but wrote a note and gave it to François Larocque to take to the National Committee. It contained the suggestion that the National Committee come and take the Fort. The response was prompt,

and a file of men soon made their way unobtrusively to the vicinity of Fort Garry. François Marion went in first and waved his handkerchief to show that the Fort was not occupied by Schultz's party or others. André Nault with about twenty men then went in and took possession.[62]

Mactavish had, in effect, chosen an effective garrison for the Fort and a government for the Settlement. He had done so after weighing the known factors in a Settlement which both he and Cowan knew very well. Mactavish could not know how ambitious and reckless Schultz could be, nor gauge the arrogance and impetuosity of the Lieutenant-governor-designate. He may have thought that Schultz and his party would accept the setback, and that McDougall would go back to Ottawa for instructions. In these two respects he was mistaken, but he had done what he could. Fort Garry was safe in the hands of the people who had always rallied to the support of the Company's government.

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[1] The family spelled the name both MacTavish and McTavish.
[2] W.J. Healy. Women of Red River. 47.
[3] Sources used are: G.P. de T. Glazebrook (ed.), The Hargrave Correspondence; E.E. Rich (ed.), The Letters of John McLoughlin.
[4] J.J. Hargrave, Red River (afterwards Hargrave), 360.
[5] Isaac Cowie, Company of Adventurers (afterwards Cowie), 156-8, calls it "Association".
[6] J.S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as An Imperial Factor, chapter 17.
[7] Cowie, 156-8.
[8] British troops had occasionally been stationed at Fort Garry. See article "Andrew McDermot" in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XI, 545-6.
[9] Hargrave, 187.
[10] Hargrave, 280-7.
[11] Hargrave, 426.
[12] Hargrave, 427.
[13] Ibid.
[14] "Report...1874", Taché's deposition, 13.
[15] Begg's Journal, "Memoirs of Louis Schmidt", 462.
[16] "Report...1874", Bown's deposition, 113.
[17] Beckles Willson, Life of Lord Strathcona, 43-4.
[18] The Act was assented to on June 22, 1869. A précis of it appeared in the Nor'Wester, June 26, 1869.
[19] PAC. Department of Public Works, Register of Correspondence, Vol. 264, Snow to McDougall, Feb. 8, 1869.
[20] PAM MG3 B9 McVicar Papers, McVicar to fiancée, Oct. 18, 1869.
[21] Nor'Wester, July 10, 1869.
[22] Globe, Sept. 4, 1869; Begg's Journal, J.J. Hargrave, in a letter to the Montreal Herald, Dec. 13, 1869, 431.
[23] Diary of A.W. Graham, July 20, 1869, 71. The Ottawa Citizen for May 22, 1869, stated that Kenneth Mackenzie had "secured...1,400 acres."

[24] Nor'Wester, July 24, 1869.
[25] Hargrave, 285-8.
[26] "Report...1874", Tachés deposition, 11. See also P.G. Laurie's diary for October 8, 1869.
[27] AASB, Dugas to Taché, August 24, 1869.
[28] "Report...1874", Tachés deposition, Mactavish to Taché, Sept. 4, 1869, 9 and 10.
[29] "Report...1874", Tachés deposition, 11-2.
[30] "Report...1874", Tachés deposition, 15
[31] Mactavish was suffering from tuberculosis. He died in Liverpool in July of 1870 on his way to the south of France. See PAC microfilm reel G-756, diary of William Cowan, entries for Sept. 25, Oct. 13 and Oct. 17, 1869.
[32] E.E. Rich (ed.), Eden Colville's Letters, lxxxix; Morice, Dictionnaire Historique, 204.
[33] Begg, Creation of Manitoba, 89-90.
[34] Cowie, Company of Adventurers, 381.
[35] F.N. Shrive, "Charles Mair: A Document of the Red River Rebellion", in C.H.R., Vol. 40, 1959, 221.
[36] Globe, Dec. 27, 1868.
[37] Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement, 241-63.
[38] Dugas, Histoire Véridique des Faits Qui Ont Préparé le Mouvement des Métis de la Rivière Rouge en 1869 (afterwards Dugas, Histoire), 36.
[39] Nor'Wester, May 14, 1862; Nor'Wester "Extra", Sept 11, 1864; Hargrave, p.438.
[40] "Report...1874", Dennis's deposition, 186.
[41] It must be emphasized that this refers to "townships six and seven" of the original survey, which featured a township of 64 800-acre sections.
[42] A.C. Roberts, "The Surveys in the Red River Settlement in 1869", in The Canadian Surveyor, Vol. 24, June 1970, 236-40.
[43] Ibid; See Cowan's diary entries for Oct. 11 and 12, 1869.
[44] Dugas Histoire, 44ff. See also "Report...1874", Cowan's deposition, 126.
[45] A.C. Roberts, op. cit., 242-3.
[46] Begg's Journal, "Memoir of Louis Riel on the Course and Purpose of the Red River Resistance", 529.
[47] Dugas, Histoire, 46.
[48] Stanley, Louis Riel, 31-3; Brian Young, George-Etienne Cartier, 10-1.
[49] Dugas, Histoire, 48.
[50] Dugas, Histoire, 48-52.
[51] Dugas, Histoire, 55-6.
[52] C.S.P. 1870, V. No. 12.
[53] The text is in Begg, Creation of Manitoba (afterwards Creation), 34-6. See Cowan's diary for Oct. 22, 1869.
[54] E.H. Oliver, The Canadian North-West: Its Early Development...(afterwards Oliver), Vol. 1, 615-8, Minutes of a meeting of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia, October 25, 1869. See also PAC Cowan's Diary, Oct. 25, 1869.
[55] Oliver, Vol. 1, 615-8, Minutes of a meeting of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia, October 25, 1869.
[56] Oliver, Vol. 1, 618-9, Minutes of a Meeting of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia, October 30, 1869; PAC Cowan's Diary, Oct. 27, 1869.
[57] Nor'Wester, Oct. 26, 1869.
[58] Manitoba News-Letter, Feb. 1, 1871.
[59] Saskatchewan Archives, Diary of P.G. Laurie, 32, 46.
[60] This is John Sutherland, Point Douglas, a member of the Council of Assiniboia.
[61] PAM MG12 Box 16/19 Schultz Papers, Letter 117, John Sutherland, MPP, to Schultz, March 18, 1871.
[62] "Letter of Louis Riel and Ambroise Lépine to Lieutenant-Governor Morris, Jan. 3, 1873", in C.H.R., Vol. VII, June, 1926, 140-1, de Trémaudan's footnote 4. See Cowan's Diary for Nov. 2, 1869.

The Rifles

On September 17, 1869, William McDougall, then making his preparations to leave for Fort Garry and his post of lieutenant-governor of Manitoba, wrote a memorandum to the Cabinet requesting that the militia department be instructed to send to Fort Garry not fewer than one hundred Spencer carbines and 250 Peabody muskets. These were to be equipped with bayonets and accoutrements, and between 8,000 and 10,000 rounds of suitable cartridges

> for the use of such Police and Volunteer Force as may be found necessary.

A committee of the Cabinet met on September 22 and decided to advise that instructions should issue accordingly. Sir John A. Macdonald signed the report and the Governor General approved it.[1] Action was taken at the department of militia and defence on September 28, and the order was transmitted to the superintendent of stores.[2]

Clearly the sending of a shipment of rifles to follow McDougall to the North-West was part of Canadian government policy.

By October 5 McDougall, then in Toronto, was becoming uneasy about the rifles and telegraphed an inquiry to Sir George Cartier.[3] Inquiries were made and it was learned that the shipment had left Kingston by boat the preceding Friday, October 1.[4] The rifles made their way to St. Paul, Minnesota, on schedule. The end of steel was then somewhere near St. Cloud, and it was at that station that the rifles were transshipped from the railway train to carts which would take them over the long prairie trail to Fort Garry. The cases of rifles were noticed by Métis freighters, and the message went down to the Red River Settlement that the new Governor was coming with rifles to arm the Canadians then in the Red River Settlement as surveyors and settlers.[5] When the Métis National Committee heard of this they decided that McDougall must be "accosted" at the international boundary.

When McDougall realized that he was not going to be allowed to cross the border he sent word back to have the rifles put in storage near Fort Abercrombie. The rifles remained there until the fall of 1870, when Lieutenant-governor Archibald arranged for their shipment to Fort Garry.[6]

In view of the importance which these rifles attained in stimulating the Métis to prevent McDougall from entering the Settlement we must ask ourselves questions about them. What police force was going to require 350 rifles with bayonets and accoutrements? What volunteer force did the Cabinet have in mind? What events in the North-West had prompted the sending of these rifles? Had someone in the North-West recommended the sending of these arms, and, if so, why?

It must be noted that McDougall's memorandum was written on September 17; the committee met and reported on the 22nd. On these dates the two events traditionally considered as signalling the beginning of the Insurrection were still in the future. Riel and the Métis had not stepped on the surveyors' chain and, of course, McDougall had not been "accosted" at the border. Yet 350 rifles – enough to equip a regiment – were to go to the North-West. Which 350 men were to have these rifles issued to them and under what circumstances?

There are three possibilities which may be identified and verified by the sources available to us. Let us consider them now.

The Canadian Cabinet had in mind the eventual establishment of a police force for service in the North-West Territories. In a letter to McDougall, written in December of 1869 after the Insurrection had begun, Macdonald sketched out the broad outlines of the force then envisaged:

> ...you can, with Cameron, be organizing a plan for a QUASI military body (a Mounted Police). This force should be a mixed

> one – of pure whites and British and French half-breeds [sic], taking great care that the half-breed [sic] element does not predominate.[7]

Captain D.R. Cameron, then with McDougall at Pembina, was to be the officer commanding this force. Later in December Macdonald wrote to Cameron throwing more light on his view of the force to be considered:

> ...the best Force would be MOUNTED RIFLEMEN, trained to act as Cavalry but also instructed in the Rifle exercise. They should also be instructed, as certain of the Line are, in the use of Artillery. This body should not be expressly Military, but should be styled Police, and have the Military bearing of the Irish Constabulary.[8]

It is not clear what status any force organized by Cameron would have had at that time. The authorization for it had to wait for several months. In April of 1870 the Cabinet approved a Memorandum prepared by Macdonald recommending the organization of a police force. It was expected to reach an eventual strength of 200 men, fifty of whom were to be enlisted immediately for a three-year term. The men were to be provided with horses and cavalry equipment. At the end of their three-year period of service the men were to become eligible for a free allotment of land. Captain D.R. Cameron was again recommended as commanding officer.[9]

Recruiting evidently began, for on May 5 William Smith reported to Commissioner McMicken that he had "a large number of names for Mounted Police." However, the next sentence of his letter makes it appear that the work of recruiting had been ordered halted: "When I got your message to stop work there the men were just commencing to come in."[10]

This force is mentioned in a last and unnumbered paragraph of Lindsay's instructions to Wolseley:

> The Dominion Government has appointed Captain Cameron to take up a body of men to act as mounted police but you will not permit him to precede or accompany you.[11]

However, the force did not follow the Red River Expeditionary Force, and was not available to either Smith or Archibald as a civil force to maintain order.

Where this police force is concerned we are still left with the question of why 350 rifles were sent to the North-West when the immediate goal of the authorities was a force of fifty men.

Let us now turn to the "Volunteer Force" referred to in the language of the Cabinet committee. Which "Volunteer Force" was meant, and what circumstances would render it "necessary"? Was a "Volunteer Force" of Red River people under consideration? If so, what was the urgency? The Settlement had been getting along fairly satisfactorily without one. Why would the beginning of the Canadian régime suddenly see a need for 350 armed men? We now know that as early as March of 1869 John C. Schultz was insisting in "Canada First" circles that "a corps of Mounted Rifles"..."should be sent" to Red River "for the protection of Red River Territory as well as for the maintenance of order in it." Denison wrote to Charles Mair in the following August stating that his own name had been mentioned in regard to such a force. He did not say by whom.[12]

Writing in the early months of the Archibald administration the Red River historian Alexander Begg commented on this general matter:

> ...[I]t was still more unfortunate for Mr. McDougall, as well as an ill-judged act on his part, to bring with him cases of arms at the outset of his career as Governor of a new country – where he was as it were a stranger, and where the people were strangers to him. He might have known that the circumstances, when blazed abroad by the newspapers, would be looked upon with suspicion by the people of the North-West even had there been no opposition to his entrance into the Territory. A regiment of regular soldiers would have been viewed as only a step to keep up the dignity of the Government, and protect the settlers if necessary, but arms, without the men to handle them, was certainly a queer method to sustain the dignity of the law.[13]

There is no doubt what the Métis thought about the shipment of rifles. Writing in late 1872 Riel stated that

> Several hundred men recently arrived in the country, partisans of Snow and Dennis, by whom most of them were employed, boasted that they had come in advance of Mr. McDougall, as his soldiers, and that they were ready to support him by force of arms.[14]

In 1874 Riel prepared his Memoir, and in it stated that the Canadian adventurers

> had already declared that they had come from Ontario, in advance of Mr. McDougall, as a military force, being fully decided to impose Mr. McDougall on us as governor by strong-arm methods if necessary.[15]

Many years after the Insurrection Rev. George Dugas told about how Walton Hyman had spent some time at St. Norbert acting as a "spy" for Schultz. While there Hyman told the Métis family with whom he boarded that a number of the Canadians had brought military uniforms with them and that he had one himself.[16] When the news of McDougall's rifles came to the Settlement the Métis drew the obvious conclusion. Part of Dugas' story can be verified from other sources. Dugas wrote that Hyman was at St. Norbert "une quinzaine" or two weeks.[17] Actually Hyman was in that vicinity more than two months, ostensibly as a tanner, having gone there in early August. He placed an advertisement in the Nor'Wester stating that he was "at the Stinking River tannery and that all kinds of leather will be furnished there in the most approved manner – Orders solicited. References – Messrs. Stalker and Wright, Winnipeg."[18] Presumably Hyman's stay at Stinking River came to an end with his deposition of October 22, 1869, before Dr. Cowan at Fort Garry.[19]

Hyman's deposition amounted to a warning that parties of men were about to commit riot. Was his intention to alert the Council of Assiniboia or to alert a group of men who were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the latest in rifles? The Council, for its part, did not see its way

clear to taking action on the warning. As for the Canadians in and around Winnipeg, they did not take action before the Métis National Committee acted.

We must now consider a third possibility suggested by the sources.

In the period both before and after McDougall's departure from Canada for the North-West McDougall and Macdonald were receiving letters from individuals with militia experience who were prepared to take "Volunteer Battalions" to the North-West as volunteers and as colonists. The first offer came in September, 1869, from the County of Mégantic in Quebec's Eastern Townships, and gives a fascinating glimpse of what was going on in the minds of people in small rural settlements as they contemplated the forthcoming transfer of the North-West to Canadian rule. On September 3 Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Barwis, of the 55th Battalion Volunteer Militia, wrote to Macdonald on behalf of his men, residents of the area around St. Ferdinand de Halifax. Barwis began by informing Macdonald that a "perfect mania" existed "in these townships" to emigrate to the United States. Barwis said that in so doing the people were not so much wanting to "leave the old Flag" as desiring to better "their condition". Barwis thought that this "epidemic" could be turned to "our own western possessions". "The government having lately acquired the Hudson [sic] Bay Territory," he went on,

> I have lately taken every opportunity of mentioning these facts to all my Friends and men that have served under me, firmly believing that the Territory in question is the best place for our young men to emigrate to, and that they are the best adapted...on account of the similarity of the climates, and if a commencement were once made, those in future who leave these Townships, would naturally follow after...I will undertake to raise five hundred men or more, who will be ready to leave as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made to send them, should this offer be accepted. They are all Township men bred and born...all farmers...there is not one among them that cannot build a Bridge[,] House or make a canoe...At the same time if the Government would accept us as a Volunteer Battalion, we would be happy to do

> so, and will be found ready...to turn out any moment in the defense of our country.[20]

Barwis pledged himself to produce the signatures of five hundred men to emigrate to Red River. He wrote to McDougall on September 6, enclosing a copy of his letter to Macdonald. He told McDougall that the men would have to know the government's decision soon, since the men "would require to sell off and get some things ready. I suppose it would be too late to think of going before next spring; however, I could get a good number to go this fall if necessary."[21]

David Price, of Quebec City, wrote to Macdonald in support of Barwis. He pointed out that the men were "all on the eve of leaving for the States and we cannot afford to lose such Canadian born, bone and sinew as these young fellows are made of."[22]

It must be emphasized that these letters were written before there was any news of trouble in the North-West. Not unexpectedly, after the news of trouble arrived other offers were received, like that of John Boxall, of Toronto, who wrote to Macdonald on November 18:

> It is reported here that you are about to send an armed force to Red River. A number of officers connected with the Volunteer Force in Toronto have spoken to me and will raise a regiment in a few days if required. If you move in the matter give us a chance.[23]

Barwis, of St. Ferdinand de Halifax, renewed his offer on November 20:

> I have just heard that a Force might be required for active service for the Red River Territory. I therefore hasten to offer my services and that of the Battalion under my command for immediate active service if required and with a view to settle in the country as formerly offered the men are ready and willing.[24]

Is it not reasonable to assume that, faced with such offers of support from the country's Volunteer Militia, Macdonald, McDougall and the rest of the Cabinet naively supposed that there could be no harm in having rifles shipped to the North-West, just in case they might be needed there, either by a group of people already in the Settlement or by a group to come later?

The sending of rifles to the North-West certainly was Canadian government policy before trouble broke out at Red River.

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[1] PAC RG2, 1, Vol. 17, PC708.
[2] PAC RG9, IIA1, Vol. 13, Department of Militia and Defence to Superintendent of Stores, Sept. 28, 1869.
[3] PAC RG9, IIA1, Vol. 13, McDougall to Cartier, Oct. 5, 1869.
[4] PAC RG9 IIA1, Vol. 13, W.P. Philips to Lt. Col. Wily, Oct. 5, 1869.
[5] A. Begg, Creation, 51-2; G. Dugas, Histoire, 53.
[6] PAC RG9 IIA1, Vol. 27, Archibald to Howe, Nov. 5, 1870.
[7] PAC MG 26A, Vol. 516, Macdonald Papers, Letter Book 13, 712-6, Macdonald to McDougall, Dec. 12, 1869.
[8] PAC MG 26A, Vol. 516, Macdonald Papers, Letter Book 13, 767-8, Macdonald to Cameron, December 21, 1869.
[9] PAC RG2, Series 1, Vol. 2, Privy Council order 1335.
[10] PAC MG 26A Vol. 245, Smith to G. McMicken, May 5, 1870.
[11] PAC RG9 IIA1, Vol. 30, Instructions to Wolseley, May 26, 1870.
[12] QUL, Mair Papers, Denison to Mair, August 11, 1869.
[13] A. Begg, Creation, 52.
[14] "Report...1874", 201, Riel and Lépine to Lieut. - Gov. Morris, Jan. 3, 1873. See also Writings-Riel, Vol. 1, 244.
[15] Le Métis, 28 fév., 1874. It is reproduced in English in Begg's Journal, 527ff. See also Writings-Riel, Vol. 1, 298-317.
[16] G. Dugas, Histoire, 54.
[17] G. Dugas, Histoire, 53.
[18] The reader will notice that in the August 17 and 24 insertions the name was misspelled "Lyman". By August 31 it was correctly spelled "Hyman". The advertisement appeared Sept. 7, 13, 21 and October 26.
[19] The deposition may be found in Begg, Creation, 34-6.
[20] PAC MG27 1C6 McDougall Papers, Barwis to Macdonald, Sept. 3, 1869.
[21] PAC MG27 1C6 McDougall Papers, Barwis to McDougall, Sept. 6, 1869.
[22] PAC Macdonald Papers, Vol. 101, Pt II, Price to Macdonald, Oct. 4, 1869.
[23] PAC Macdonald Papers, Vol. 101, Pt II, Boxall to Macdonald, Nov. 18, 1869.
[24] PAC Macdonald Papers, Vol. 101, Pt II, Barwis to Macdonald, Nov. 20, 1869.