

O'Donoghue's Raid

It is now time to trace the events leading up to what historians have called the "Fenian Raid" of 1871 but what is more properly called "O'Donoghue's Raid". In doing this we shall learn why it was that Archibald, successful for a third time in holding the allegiance of the Half-breed people of Manitoba, found himself forced to submit his resignation.

After the drowning of Elzéar Goulet on September 13, 1870, Riel, Lépine and O'Donoghue met in conference at St. Norbert on September 17 to discuss the interests and welfare of their people. The most important matters discussed at the meeting, according to the findings of J.B. Pritchett, were the "perfidious treachery" of the Canadian government in dealing with the people of Red River, and the determination of those present to ask the president of the United States to use his good offices in remonstrance with the British government "against the course of the perfidy and oppression pursued by Canada toward the inhabitants of Manitoba".¹ At this meeting O'Donoghue presented a resolution inviting the United States to annex the territories formerly known as Rupert's Land. But for the arguments of Riel this resolution could well have been supported by the meeting. However, a compromise resolution was framed and passed, "earnestly" appealing to "His Excellency, U.S. Grant, President of the United States", to use his good offices in an appeal to Her Majesty the Queen, "to cause an investigation to be made into the extent to which those pledges have been violated, and to demand, in our behalf, that full reparation be made for all those violated pledges, and the injury and damages resulting to us therefrom". O'Donoghue was delegated as the "logical person" to carry this supplication to Washington. His acquaintance with a number of Minnesota politicians, including Alexander Ramsey, U.S. senator for Minnesota, Ignatius Donnelly, and J.W. Taylor, the special agent of the

United States government, soon to arrive in Manitoba as American Consul, was believed to favor him in this errand.²

Not long after this meeting Riel and O'Donoghue had a bitter quarrel which ended their relationship. This rupture was to have important consequences for Manitoba and for Archibald. Most immediate, of course, was that the "Memorial and Petition" as drawn up by the committee was never presented to Grant. In its place a modified document was drawn up. The changes were not extensive, but they gave the document a much different aspect. Where the original document asked Grant to intercede with Her Majesty the Queen the new one left out any reference to her and asked "His Excellency" President Grant to cause the investigation to be made. An added paragraph asked that either the United States annex Manitoba and the North-West or assist the people of Red River to establish their right to the territory and secure their independence.³

O'Donoghue went about his errand methodically in St. Paul and in Washington. President Grant received O'Donoghue in January of 1871, "listened attentively" but was not convinced that a majority of Red River people desired either annexation or independence.⁴ O'Donoghue had no better success in New York, where he spoke to the council of the Fenian brotherhood. He was told that he could look for no help from them "beyond their prayers".⁵

After this rebuff O'Donoghue returned to Minnesota and the Dakota Territory. If we can believe a Manitoba News-Letter report he was in Minnesota in late March arranging details of a raid.⁶ While there he could have heard accounts of the death of Tanner, of O'Lone's death, of the attack on André Nault, of the mutiny of February 18 and of the repeated attacks on individual Half-breeds by Volunteers. This news would have strengthened his conviction that the long-

suffering Half-breeds would rise and give him their support if he appeared on the border with a body of armed men.

O'Donoghue returned to New York again and somehow won the support of the Fenian leader John O'Neill. Plans for a raid on Manitoba were laid before the Fenian council, but once again the Brotherhood refused to give its support. O'Neill resigned his place and told the Brotherhood he would "go it alone".⁷ O'Neill and O'Donoghue sought for help wherever they thought it could be found. They were joined by other disaffected Irishmen. These men drew up and signed a compact which stated their intention of organizing "an expedition having for its object to assist in the deliverance of the people of Rupert's Land, etc., from English or Canadian rule and the establishment of a Republican form of government instead...."⁸

There can be no doubt about the rationale and motivation behind this compact and expedition. Reports told of the increasing exasperation of the Half-breed people of Manitoba with the new order. In a letter to Macdonald written on October 9, 1871, Archibald summarized concisely one of the reasons which should, under ordinary circumstances, have made successful a raid and rising of the kind envisaged by O'Donoghue:

Many of [the French Half-breeds] have been so beaten and outraged that they feel as if they were living in a state of slavery. They say that the bitter hatred of [the disbanded Volunteers and newcomers] is a yoke so intolerable that they would gladly escape it by any sacrifice.⁹

However, Archibald knew that there were other very compelling reasons for Half-breed dissatisfaction. Testifying before the Select Committee of 1874 Archibald told of the confrontation at Rivière aux Îlets de Bois: "The danger was over", he concluded, "but the feelings of sullen discontent remained. This was in July. In October came the raid. It was predicated on the discontents known to prevail among the French half-breeds [sic]."¹⁰

Archibald did not lay before the Select Committee of 1874 a confidential letter he had written to Macdonald on October 7, 1871, just before the Métis volunteered their services to him. In this letter he linked his success in the Rivière aux Îlets de Bois confrontation with his success in October:

One thing, I am convinced of, and that is, if I had thrown these people off, and led them to believe that the promises relative to the lands WHICH THEY BELIEVE HAVE BEEN MADE,¹¹ WERE NOT TO BE KEPT [emphasis mine], I should have had little influence to bring them to support the course I was urging them.¹²

Archibald returned to the topic on October 13, in a long "private" letter to Macdonald. By that time Archibald was being attacked by the Manitoba Liberal¹³ and the editor, Stewart Mulvey, had addressed him a note demanding to know whether he had crossed the Red River, whether he had accepted the services of the Métis, and whether Riel had been there. Already on the defensive, Archibald wrote, in part, as follows: "Please show this letter to Mr. Aiken [sic]. He will find I did not overestimate the danger when I gave my reply to the Half-breed representatives." He went on:

Had my reply been other than it was you would at this moment have had a civil war on your hands, in addition to a Fenian Raid.

Whether the difference between a lot here and a lot there, in allocating the HalfBreed [sic] claims, whether the privilege of driving a few Métis off [f] the Banks of Rivière Aux Îles de Bois in order to people it with Orangemen, and Baptize it 'the Boyne', is worth the cost - judge for yourself.

"The trouble," Archibald observed tersely, "was not from without, but from within."¹⁴

Rumors of another Fenian Raid had never ceased to appear in Canadian and American newspapers following the conclusion of the raid of May, 1870, to which reference has been made in an earlier chapter. Fortunately, we do not have to rely upon rumor as we try to learn about

O'Donoghue's raid, for there is solid documentation of how he moved his force to Manitoba, and of how Archibald and others prepared to cope with it.¹⁵

The American consulate in Winnipeg received information early in September about the probability of a Fenian attack on Manitoba, and this information was forwarded to Archibald. Archibald gave an assurance that neither the Manitoba authorities nor the Canadian government would object to a movement of American troops across the international boundary for a suppression of a violation of the neutrality laws of the United States. On September 11 a full statement of the situation was received in Washington. On the 19th orders were sent to Colonel Wheaton to make the proposed armed intervention if and when it became necessary. Making these arrangements was the least of Archibald's problems as he tried to cope with a dangerous situation.¹⁶

In Ottawa, Gilbert McMicken was given a double assignment. He was to go to Winnipeg and take up the position of Agent of Dominion Lands for Manitoba. On the way he was to act in his capacity of Commissioner of Dominion Police, reporting the movements of those believed to be Fenians and advising Archibald on suitable steps to take. As report followed rumor Macdonald telegraphed to McMicken at Windsor, hurrying him on to Manitoba. Along with McMicken were his son George and Frank Ritchie, both "most useful and reliable members of his Secret Service Police". Short stopovers in Windsor and Chicago enabled the trio to learn that the small "Fenian" body of some forty-one men was very disorganized and dispirited. These men were counting on a warm welcome from the "hospitable homes" of the Manitoba Métis, while loot from the Hudson's Bay Company stores would be considered as payment for services to O'Donoghue and O'Neill.¹⁷

McMicken telegraphed Macdonald from St. Paul on September 27, and wrote a letter giving more details later the same day. O'Neill and O'Donoghue were both well on the way to Pembina along with "several cart loads of ammunition". More than forty men had left Chicago travelling in small groups "so as not to create suspicion". McMicken had received a report that the Northern Pacific Railway was providing O'Donoghue with funds in the hope that a fracas in Manitoba would "drive the Canadian Government into activity in starting the Pacific Rail Road".¹⁸ McMicken had met Mr. Boyd, the Manitoba Commissioner of Public Works. Boyd had said "that the French halfbreeds [sic] [were] greatly dissatisfied and excited and not at all to be relied upon and that he would not be surprised to hear of their falling in with O'Donohoe [sic] and O'Neil [sic] in their enterprise. The feeling he describe[d] as intense and not within the control of Bishop Taché or any other authority."¹⁹ On the 28th McMicken took the train from St. Paul to the end of steel at Morris, Minnesota.²⁰ On the same day, at ten o'clock in the morning, an important meeting began at St. Vital, Manitoba.

Twelve influential Métis met at Louis Riel's home at St. Vital, a house that had seen many meetings since Riel's return in May.²¹ Present were men who had been in very close association for two years of intense political activity: Baptiste Beauchemin, Elzéar de la Gimodière, Ambroise, Baptiste and Maxime Lépine, Pierre Léveillé, André Nault, Pierre Parenteau, Louis Riel, Janvier Ritchot, Joseph St. Germain and Baptiste Touron. Pierre Parenteau was chosen chairman, Baptiste Touron and Louis Riel joint secretaries. The chairman called upon Riel to deal with the questions they wanted to discuss. Riel placed five questions before the meeting:

1. Does the Government fulfill sufficiently its pledges towards us?
2. If it has not yet done so, have we reasons to believe that it will fulfill them honestly in the future?

3. Are we sure O'Donoghue is coming with men?
4. If he is coming, what is he coming to do?
5. At all events, what conduct must be follow respecting him and respecting Canada?

The minutes of the meeting tell us that "the meeting, after examining the difficulties that the Federal Government is meeting, answers that Canada does not fulfill sufficiently its duties towards us."²² This answer was a miracle of understatement. On several important points the answer was clearly negative. There was no indication anywhere that a general amnesty was about to be issued or was even being considered. Sixteen months after the passing of the Manitoba Act there was no sign that the distribution of the 1,400,000 acres was to be done in any manner whatever, let alone "as to meet the wishes of the Halfbreed [sic] residents", and the confrontation at Rivière Aux Ilets de Bois had shown that the Canadian government considered that any newcomer had rights equal to those of people long resident in the province. Surveyors had been in the province only two months and a Commissioner of Lands, Gilbert McMicken, was only then on the long trail to Manitoba. At least two of those present, Baptiste Lépine and André Nault, still carried the scars of injuries inflicted on them in the "law and order" which the Volunteers maintained.

The meeting answered the second question by saying that if the past was any clue to what the future would be, they had no reason to believe that the government would honor its pledges to the Half-breeds. The government was clearly squirming in response to pressure from groups in Ontario which were hostile to them. However, the meeting felt that since the government might really wish to do its duty, it appeared "reasonable to delay, on this point, a judgment which, if it were more definite on our part, might exert a wrong influence on the Métis".

When it came to the questions about O'Donoghue those present said that they had heard nothing personally from him, although news and letters had reached some of the members present from persons who were in touch with him. It would appear from rumors circulated recently that O'Donoghue really was coming. His purpose, it seemed, was to attack the province.

The fifth question gave rise to a long discussion, and those present felt that they should present a united front if it was "true that their aim [was] to unite the people on some decision". The meeting decided not "to be prevailed upon by O'Donoghue, whether he be strong or weak." It was felt that O'Donoghue, if and when he arrived at Pembina would likely send "for several" amongst them, because of their old "connection". All agreed that any person invited by O'Donoghue should, without declining the invitation, ask for a delay of four days. No one was to go and meet him in the name of any person "without an express permission of [the] Association."

At this point Riel moved, seconded by Maxime Lépine,

that every one of the members of this meeting get in touch with the representatives of the people and the influential persons of the various parishes to bring the Métis, in an unanimous manner, as much as possible, to pronounce themselves in favour of the advantages already possessed by virtue of the Manitoba Bill, and not to allow themselves to be carried away by the contingencies farther than to ask, loyally and with moderation, the accomplishment of the clauses and of the things guaranteed by our arrangements with Canada.

With policy thus agreed upon members turned to more immediate needs. Maxime Lépine moved, seconded by Ambroise Lépine, that it was important to have frequent meetings. A meeting could be called by any three members notifying the others in writing that it was advisable to meet. However, in case anyone was asked by O'Donoghue to meet him any one

member could call a meeting, and any person so invited must convene the meeting on the shortest notice, notifying Riel, who was charged with letting the others know of a meeting at St. Vital. The meeting adjourned at five o'clock, having lasted seven hours.²³

The next day at midnight, September 29, Gilbert McMicken took pen in hand at Fort Abercrombie to write a long report to Sir John A. Macdonald. McMicken had full details of the movements of O'Donoghue's parties. Forty-one Irishmen, led by two officers, had been "counted" at Morris and then at Old Crossing. They were moving toward the frontier with wagons carrying supplies, barrels of pork and hard tack. In addition, a man named Bodkin, formerly "an officer with the U.S. Revenue detective service", had recruited a company "27 strong... chiefly half-breeds [sic]" from among lumber camp workers. Their employer said some of his "head sawyers" had been enlisted. These men were to move toward St. Joe – 28 miles west of Pembina – and head directly for Portage la Prairie.

McMicken's most disturbing news, however, was what he saw as the "complicity" of Bishop Taché in O'Donoghue's plot to invade Manitoba. McMicken had met Taché, who was then on his way to the East, and had a long talk with him. Taché said he had met O'Donoghue at Georgetown and had talked with him and General O'Neill. Taché was afraid the Half-breeds would "fall in" with the movement. The conduct of the Volunteers had "exasperated" them, "matters generally were unsatisfactory" and a very bitter feeling prevailed among them as "antagonistic to the Canadians". McMicken tried to persuade Taché to return to the Settlement. He told Taché that in leaving the Settlement now he was "laying himself open to the attacks of the Globe". His interviews with O'Donoghue and O'Neill could be set down as evidence of his "complicity" in their design. Taché admitted that what McMicken said was true. He said that he

had tried to get them to abandon their enterprise, but they had responded that they were only going to Manitoba as immigrants to settle.

McMicken reported to Macdonald that he had been told of another interview involving Taché which Taché had not mentioned. "Three distinct parties" had told McMicken that Taché had been "closeted" "for hours" with one "Kennedy of Fort Garry" and "Col. Kelly", an escaped convict then using the name "Macklin". McMicken considered this report to be very serious indeed:

I must say I cannot doubt this interview and the Bishop did not mention it to me. I do not say there was anything wrong in it but you could not convince anyone here to the contrary – he is undoubtedly incautious and weak – and this is as far as I can allow myself to offer any remark.²⁴

Taché likely also did not tell McMicken of a talk he had had with Louis Riel at Father Ritchot's before leaving the Settlement on September 23. Taché had asked Riel, "Are you aware of what is going on about the Fenians?" Riel said, "Yes. I am perfectly aware that there are rumors afloat; but I do not know anything about it." "I suppose," Taché had said, "there is no doubt about your action in the matter?" Riel replied, "There is no doubt about my action in the matter, there is not the slightest doubt that I am not connected in any way with them; but in the meantime, I do not know what action to take, because you know perfectly well that my life is not safe."

I may go in the front and fight against the Fenians, and I am sure to be killed by those behind me. So I am at a loss what I can do, but you can rest assured there is not the slightest danger of me or any of my friends going with the Fenians, for they are condemned by our church, and you may be assured I will have nothing to do with them.²⁵

Before leaving Fort Abercrombie McMicken woke Tache up and again "urged and besought" him to give up his trip to Quebec and return with him to the Settlement. Taché

regretted having to refuse, but said his trip to Quebec was so important that he must proceed "at all hazards".²⁶

McMicken was so impressed with the seriousness of the situation that he arranged at Fort Abercrombie for an extra carriage to travel "express" to Winnipeg. This would involve an expense of four hundred dollars, but it would enable him to reach Winnipeg before O'Donoghue's men could reach Pembina.²⁷ He arrived in Winnipeg on the evening of October 2, and immediately reported to Archibald at his quarters in Fort Garry. He outlined the situation as he saw it, and the next day he again went to the Fort. This time he found Archibald in conversation with Father Dugas.²⁸

Thirteen months after his arrival at Fort Garry Archibald's position was fraught with as much peril as ever. He had found no premier. He had found no cabinet worthy of the name. The men who had the people's confidence had not dared to present themselves for election. Those who acted as his cabinet knew only too well that they were really just figureheads. McMicken described them as "incompetent, unreliable and invisible".²⁹ Months of incipient civil war had embittered beyond belief the people who were the chief source of his support. Now, with Bishop Taché gone, Fathers Dugas and Ritchot must help him maintain contact with the group of men who, although they dared not show themselves at Fort Garry for fear of being killed by the self-styled "loyal men", now held the destiny of Manitoba in their hands.

According to McMicken, Dugas "expressed himself exactly as Bishop Taché had done", and "caused us to believe the French would not turn out to oppose the Fenians but probably the reverse."³⁰ When Dugas had left, Archibald outlined his position to McMicken. Everything depended, Archibald said, on factors within the province. There was "every reason to apprehend a rising" of the Métis. He was doing what he could through Dugas and Ritchot, "but they

insisted as a condition that he would give them a satisfactory assurance that the promise of a full amnesty would be fulfilled at once". Without this they could exercise no influence on their people; "Riel had their hearts and he would not yield unless the amnesty was granted forthwith".³¹ This, of course, was not exactly true; Dugas and Ritchot were playing the only cards they had in a very difficult game. Riel had the people's "hearts", but he and his underground cabinet had been for several days going among the Métis people and attempting to persuade them to pronounce in favor of the Manitoba Act.

Archibald then turned to another difficulty. The feeling between the Canadians and the Half-breeds was, he said, "bitterly hostile on both sides". The Canadians were also "malignantly antagonistic" towards him as Lieutenant-governor, believing that he was under the control of Taché. Archibald said, "Mr. McMicken, you have had large experience in circumstances of this kind, and I have had none. What would you advise me to do?" McMicken recommended the issuing of a proclamation, calling upon the "whole body of the people" to "rally round the flag". Archibald replied that there were only seventy men in the Fort and he did not know "how far the feeling obtain[ed] amongst them that [was] so vindictively shown towards [him] by the Canadians in the village and settlements". He feared that a proclamation might not receive a hearty response.

McMicken reassured Archibald by saying that he "knew the genius and mind of the Ontario people" and that they would certainly "rally round the nation's flag" and "stand by the Queen". The two men then set to work on the wording of a proclamation. Mr. Cunningham of the Manitoban received instructions to have it set up and printed. Captain Villiers would then see to its distribution and posting.³²

McMicken reported to Macdonald that on October 4 "companies of the English settlers" began to enroll themselves and offer their services. That same day – October 4 – Father Ritchot came to the Fort for a long talk with Archibald, part of which McMicken was witness to. Ritchot said that the people "were embittered in feeling[,] felt that faith had not been kept with them and had been the object of insult by the Orange party and Canadians". He did not think "many" would go to join the Fenians, but all was "very uncertain". Ritchot mentioned that O'Donoghue was reported to have said that he was only bringing in peaceable Irish immigrants of their own faith. To this Archibald replied by asking if Ritchot believed that O'Neill and the other Fenian chiefs had come with arms and a sworn military following "to settle down as peaceable farmers".³³ This conversation was interrupted by the arrival of other visitors, and McMicken had to "entertain a body of clergy of the other persuasion – McLean, Young, Black and two others" and sent them away persuaded that "all was being rightly and well done".³⁴

In the part of the conversation not overheard by McMicken Ritchot had important things to say, and he spoke of them again at length when he gave his deposition before the Select Committee of 1874. On that day – October 4 – Archibald had asked him to come to the Fort. When he arrived Archibald asked him about the attitude the French population would take if there was a Fenian invasion. From what Archibald had seen the French population was loyal, but it was his duty to have exact information. If the French remained loyal there would be nothing to fear, for they were the part of the population that lived near the threatened frontier. On the other hand, if that part of the population was hostile to the authorities the country would be lost. Ritchot answered that it was certain that Archibald could count on them. Ritchot had seen the leaders, including Riel, and they were anxious to know what would be the attitude of the authorities. He said as well that the leaders were only waiting for word to go to the front if

required and meet whatever invasion there should be. Riel thought that that precaution should be taken immediately.

Archibald had then commissioned Ritchot to tell the Half-breeds, and especially Riel, that he would be very happy to see them give their help to the authorities. Ritchot then "observed" that Riel was very much perplexed because his friends had told him that if he went forward and showed himself he would be killed, that any action he took would be badly interpreted, that there were warrants out against him, and that he would be arrested in arms or elsewhere if he appeared in public. Archibald then replied that there was no danger at all, that any steps Riel took would be well considered, and that it was a good time for Riel to prove his loyalty. Archibald added that it would be a "further occasion for the hastening of a grant of an amnesty", and that it was time for Riel to prove that what had been said against him was false.

Ritchot told the Select Committee of 1874 that he promised to communicate to Riel what Archibald had said. Archibald would have a reply the very next day.³³

In this conversation both men had been slightly less than candid with each other. Ritchot was not in a position to say that the leaders were only waiting for word to go to the front if required. On October 4 the work of those leaders was far from finished. As for Archibald, he was certainly in no position to say that Riel would be in no danger at all if he came forward, unless he meant it in the very limited sense that Riel would be in no danger from him or from anyone accompanying him. Archibald well knew that Riel would be in great danger if he appeared in public anywhere outside the French parishes. However, in the crisis he was obliged to say whatever was necessary to keep Riel and the other Métis leaders working with him rather than against him.

While these conversations were taking place on October 4, events had taken place in the French-speaking parishes which we must now examine. "In the night" of Monday, October 2, "a young boy, a messenger of O'Donoghue" arrived from Pembina inviting Métis leaders – Baptiste Lépine, Baptiste Touron, Pierre Parenteau, Joseph Delorme, André Nault, Ambroise Lépine, Louis Riel, F.X. Pagée, Pierre Poitras – to meet him "at the end of twenty-four hours at the Point à Michel near Pembina".³⁶ At a meeting held on October 4 at Ambroise Lépine's it was revealed that all members of the Association except Baptiste Lépine and André Nault had refused to respond to O'Donoghue. The two men, it was explained, had tried to find Riel, but not being able to find him, had left a note saying: "We are going to see what O'Donoghue wants, whether he is strong, and to watch the doings of Bruce, and of all the half-breeds [sic] of the Province near him."³⁷ Baptiste Lépine and André Nault had good personal reasons for curiosity about O'Donoghue's strength, and the others knew it. André Nault sent to the meeting a note with the observation that the Métis he talked to were "very much excited and hard to control at this time." The meeting was informed that Archibald was issuing a proclamation. After discussion the meeting was adjourned until the next day at Riel's.

We have now to examine the events of October 5, the day O'Donoghue's raid took place. In view of what many, including the "loyal" men and the Canadian Cabinet, later said about that raid we must pay careful attention to what happened and when.

Father Ritchot stated before the Select Committee of 1874 that, after he left Archibald's presence he "met friends who observed to [him] that Riel's friends would not allow him to go forward unless there would be something in writing, saying that Riel would not be ill-treated". Ritchot promptly wrote a note to Archibald:

Upon deep reflection I take the liberty of remarking to your Excellency, that inasmuch as Mr. Riel is in such a position that he

cannot act openly as a citizen, I do not believe that he should place himself at [the Half-breeds'] head unless he had some guarantee that his proceeding would be looked upon with favor by Your Excellency. Consequently, I beg leave to ask of you some assurance which will shelter him from any legal proceeding at least for the moment.

(signed)
N.J. Ritchot

P.S. Being about to leave immediately for my parish, I beg to request Your Excellency will kindly give an answer to the bearer who will at once bring it to me.

(signed)
N.J.R.³⁸

When he read the note Archibald immediately realized that he was in a tight spot. He knew full well that he could not really guarantee anything, certainly not the safety of the man considered by the violent "loyal" party to be the "murderer" of Thomas Scott. The police force had its hand full, and he could not count on the loyalty of the Volunteers left in Fort Garry. In the absence of a general amnesty and with the almost continuous disturbances of the past spring and summer he had had to postpone again and again the second session of the Manitoba legislature,³⁹ and he still did not know when there could be a session. Even the celebration of Canada's birthday had been fraught with the danger of an outbreak of violence.⁴⁰ However, if Manitoba was to be held as part of Canada he must retain the allegiance of the Métis people, particularly those parishes lying between Fort Garry and the border. That allegiance was at this moment trembling in the balance. The fact that he held Ritchot's note in his hand meant that although Ritchot and his friends liked and trusted him they did not trust the Canadian government to keep its word. Considering what had happened after the confrontation at Rivière aux Îlets de Bois, Archibald realized ruefully that they had a good reason. He also realized that in preparing a note to satisfy Ritchot and Riel he could be laying his head on the executioner's block. He looked again at the note. Ritchot had used the expression "pour la circonstance

actuelle". That seemed to set adequate limits to his guarantee. There was a risk, but the risk had to be taken. He set to work on a reply:

"Should Mr. Riel come forward as suggested, he need be under no apprehension that his liberty shall be interfered with in any way: to use your own language, 'pour la circonstance actuelle'. It is hardly necessary for me to add that the cooperation of the French Half-breeds and their leaders in the support of the Crown, under present circumstances, will be very welcome and cannot be looked upon otherwise than as entitling them to most favorable consideration."⁴¹

Ritchot told the Select Committee that he saw Mr. Riel,⁴² who was very glad to see that the Governor had confidence in him and in the population. Ritchot may well have seen Riel at the meeting held at Riel's home that day.

On the morning of October 5 – about seven o'clock – O'Donoghue's force crossed the boundary and took possession of the Hudson's Bay Company fort at Pembina, taking prisoner Mr. W.H. Watt, the one-armed officer then in charge there, in the name of the Provisional Government of Red River. Watt was kept prisoner until O'Donoghue's men fled at the approach of American troops under the command of Col. Wheaton.⁴³ For a short time O'Donoghue's men were in possession of the fort, able to plunder it and keep the fort's people captive. There was no general rising of the Métis, although it appears that a tiny group of men joined the group for a time.⁴⁴ When O'Donoghue, who had made good his escape, was captured on the Canadian side of the border, it was by a party of Métis, who took him to the American fort at Pembina.

There was reason for satisfaction when the underground cabinet met at Riel's at eleven o'clock that same morning. Present for the first time were the Honorable François Dauphinais, of St. François Xavier,⁴⁵ and member of the Legislative Council, and Angus McKay, member of

the Legislative Assembly for Lake Manitoba. The presence of these two men indicated a broadened base of support for the Association. André Nault and Baptiste Lépine were not present, and there was no news from Pembina. After long deliberation on the "opportunity to declare themselves neutral or in favor of the government" Ambroise Lépine moved, seconded by Elzéar de la Gimodière, that those in favor of the government should stand up. Twelve stood up, Baptiste Tournon indicating that he preferred neutrality.⁴⁶ The meeting adjourned at eight o'clock in the evening, members having agreed to reassemble at nine o'clock in the morning.⁴⁷

Archibald's fears with regard to the feelings of the English-speaking population were well-founded. While McMicken observed "companies" of people coming to Fort Garry to enroll themselves on the fourth and fifth, there was no unanimity among the English-speaking population with regard to the desired mobilization. Addressing an Orange Lodge 42 years after the event, George Young, the son of Rev. George Young, spoke as follows:

[T]he loyalist portion of the people was so much disgusted by the lack of action by the authorities in their failure to punish the late Rebel leaders, that it was far from certain, in the minds of thoughtful men, just how far the Governor could depend on the English settlers and the "LOYALIST" [emphasis his] Canadians to answer his call....⁴⁸

In its second issue after O'Donoghue's raid the Manitoba Liberal made a statement about the recent lack of unanimity:

There was a little hesitation amongst those known as the loyal party before volunteering, owing to the insults that had been heaped upon them since the advent of Governor Archibald....

"However," the Liberal went on, "when it became an established fact that rebel Half-breeds had polluted our soil with hostile intent, those of the loyal party who at first hesitated could stand it no longer.

By six o'clock the following morning [6th] nearly 300 men from Winnipeg alone were enrolled, marched to Government House, and their services proffered. Before the sun set... the men who at first **DECLARED THEY WOULD NEVER AGAIN SHOULDER A MUSKET** [emphasis mine] were on their way, knee deep in mud, amid pelting rain, swearing vengeance against the hated foes of Britain.⁴⁹

The Manitoban, of course, denied that there had been hesitation on anyone's part.⁵⁰

It is more than sixty miles as the crow flies from the international boundary to Fort Garry.⁵¹ Since the old trail followed many of the bends of the Red River the distance travelled was more than that. The express stage that McMicken hired to complete his journey to Fort Garry – Winnipeg made that distance in a long, hard day's run, having changed horses several times.⁵² Such speed was not available to the average person unless he had been able to make special arrangements. The telegraph line was not in operation, since, although poles were in position throughout most of the distance to Pembina and beyond, the wire had not been strung.⁵³

André Nault and Baptiste Lépine probably had the first – and most authoritative – news of the projected raid to reach St. Vital when they reported to the reassembled committee at nine o'clock on the morning of the sixth of October. They had set out on their return ride on the morning of the fourth and spent the night at Pointe Coupée. They reached St. Vital late at night on the fifth, too late to attend the meeting of the Committee held that day.⁵⁴ They reported that O'Donoghue had told them that Fort Pembina was to be taken the next morning, i.e., the fifth. He had enough force with him, he said, but needed the Métis to secure the declaration of independence. He had added that he had money and would eventually bring into the country "five men against Canada's one". With this report before the meeting, the chairman, Pierre Parenteau, asked the meeting what course should be recommended to the people. Ambroise Lépine, Pierre Lèveillé, Elzéar de la Gimodière, Hon. François Dauphinais and Angus McKay,

M.P.P., were all of the opinion that the people must be persuaded to support the government. The others present, with the exception of Riel, were undecided. He said that he had pronounced himself the previous day in favor of the government and asked not to be made to vote again. It was agreed to hold meetings in the parishes. The five men named above said that they would advocate support of the government at their meetings. The others agreed that it was wise to do so only "moderately", and that while they were in favor of the government they would say so with caution. The meeting decided that messengers should be sent in every direction in order that meetings could take place everywhere in the French parishes within twenty hours, and that a report of these meetings be made the next day, the seventh, between two and four in the afternoon at André Nault's, at St. Vital. The meeting adjourned until two o'clock the next afternoon.⁵⁵

It is difficult now to recapture a sense of the excitement, the hysteria even, which the news of the actual crossing of the border by O'Donoghue's men brought to the people of the Province. Since the spring of that year there had been so many rumors and reports of an invasion that no one knew what to believe. As the diarist Abbé J.L. Proulx wrote: "At the end no one believed anything." On October 6 he wrote:

Mr. O'Donoghue has arrived at Pembina!..members of the Provisional Government [sic] left in the night to join him. So the Lalique woman says. That they left is possible: that it was to join O'Donoghue I don't believe....

Later the same day he added:

Abraham's boy arrived from Fort Garry; they're waiting for the Fenians: the soldiers are digging holes around the Fort. I believed something.⁵⁶

George Young later told of what he remembered of that time:

Still the reports kept coming in, of the great unrest in the late Rebel parishes, and of gatherings and movements of bodies of late rebels towards the Frontier, to meet, as was supposed and stated by many of them, their Fenian Allies and their ex-leader W.B. O'Donoghue.⁵⁷

Major Irvine, acting in concert with Archibald, had ordered defensive measures at the Fort on October 4.⁵⁸ Later that day he was evidently sent out on a reconnaissance tour along the Pembina road.⁵⁹ Having gone four miles in that direction he camped for the night near the home of Hon. Salomon Hamelin, who put his house and stables at the disposal of Irvine and his men. There he learned of a meeting of French Half-breeds held that day. The report was that it was "enthusiastic" and in favor of supporting the government. On the morning of October 5 he resumed his tour along the road. Meeting with nothing unusual he returned as far as St. Norbert and remained there awaiting developments and further orders. At half past three a Mr. Bradley arrived from Pembina with news that Col. Wheaton was holding O'Donoghue and other Fenian leaders at Pembina, and that all their followers had crossed over to the American side. Irvine wrote to Archibald: "I shall remain here till I hear from Your Excellency, whether I had not better return to Fort Garry, as it is now reported that there are no longer any Fenians in the Province."⁶⁰

It would appear that Irvine was of the opinion that the raid was over and that all danger had passed. As he had expected, Irvine was ordered to return to Fort Garry, but Archibald and McMicken were not convinced that the danger was past. Could the move on the Hudson's Bay fort have been a feint? McMicken had made reference to a group of men who were to go to St. Joe, west of Pembina. Was it possible that an attack could come from there? Archibald decided to continue to make preparations to cope with an attack and to behave as though a general mobilization was necessary.

About 11:30 in the morning of the sixth Archibald sent for Irvine and informed him "that the Fort at Pembina had been taken, and that the Fenians were some twelve or fifteen miles within the Province". He wished Irvine to dispatch a force at once to meet them. Irvine immediately sent orders to Captain Mulvey to parade his company at Fort Garry. He left the Hudson's Bay Company Corps and the remainder of the companies of the active militia as a Provisional Battalion under the command of Captain Allan McDonald at Fort Garry. Another company under Captain Bedson was sent to garrison the Stone Fort.⁶¹

At 4:30 p.m. Irvine left Fort Garry with two Companies, the Winnipeg Volunteer Company (Captain Kennedy's) with a seven-pounder gun, and Captain Mulvey's Company, consisting chiefly of disbanded Volunteers and members of the "Canadian" party. Accompanying these companies was the necessary transport, under the command of the control officer, Major Peebles, with ten days' provisions, camp equipment and ammunition.⁶²

A drizzling rain fell all afternoon, and the men had to wait nearly three hours in the rain while the ferry conveyed the force and its transport to the south side of the Assiniboine. After the men had all crossed the river a heavy rain fell, and the men found themselves marching "knee deep" in mud. A march of about four miles was made before they camped for the night, "it being so dark that [the men] could not see the tin plates on the knapsacks of the men immediately in front of [them]".⁶³

The next day, the seventh, the force continued the march as far as St. Norbert.⁶⁴ The two companies halted to make camp not far from the residence of Father Ritchot. In 1874 Archibald told the Select Committee of what happened there:

Here, after pitching their tents, Major Irvine found out that he could not safely remain as he was afraid of his own men committing an outrage for which he saw them making

preparations. The moment he was aware of the danger he ordered his men to strike their tents and march three miles further on.⁶⁵

Many years after the event Gilbert McMicken was a little more specific as to what and who had been involved:

Here, Père Ritchot was indebted to the good feeling and watchfulness of Captain Mulvey for his escape from a danger he little suspected.⁶⁶

Mulvey's company consisted chiefly of disbanded Volunteers and members of the "Canadian" party. For many of these men their enlistment was as much for the purpose of fighting Half-breeds as it was for fighting Fenians.⁶⁷ Such men as Buchanan, Davison and Farquharson – all in Mulvey's company according to the pay lists now in the Public Archives – were not above killing Father Ritchot, burning his house or lynching him on one of the tall trees of his farm.⁶⁸ It is to be noted that the men involved were not arrested or restrained. Instead the entire force was made to break camp and march. There is here a very strong suggestion that the officers dared not restrain or punish these men for fear of the consequences.

Here we have anticipated events a little for the sake of convenience. While Irvine's men were struggling through the mud and darkness on the way south from the ferry crossing, the people of St. Vital were holding a meeting in response to a call issued earlier that day. André Beauchemin, M.P.P. for St. Vital, acted as chairman and Charles Nolin of the Pointe des Chênes as secretary. Beauchemin opened the meeting by saying that the meeting had three choices: O'Donoghue, neutrality or the government. The meeting expressed the wish that whatever Riel said should govern. Riel replied by saying that the circumstances and his own views were, perhaps, not well appreciated by the Half-breeds. He was afraid of divisions among them. "I therefore pray you to unite," he said, "and since you show me such a great confidence, believe

me, I am not changed. Do not side with injustice: but let us support unanimously the following motion:

That it is just to make it known to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba that the present meeting avails itself of the circumstances in which the country finds itself to confirm its attachment to the constitution which governs us.

Charles Nolin seconded and the motion passed.

The participation of André Beauchemin, M.P.P. is of interest here. As for Charles Nolin, of Oak Point, he had been a member of both conventions during the winter of 1869-1870, and had been one of Riel's staunchest opponents in the stormy days of the Insurrection and Provisional Government. The committee's base of support was becoming very broad indeed.⁶⁹

The day of the incident at St. Norbert there was intense activity among the Half-breeds. Meetings were held at White Horse Plains, St. Boniface, St. Vital, St. Norbert North, St. Norbert South (Pointe Coupée) and St. Agathe.⁷⁰ Each parish made its decision, chose its captains and sent messengers to the Committee at St. Vital. When the results were in from the parishes Louis Riel was instructed to inform the Lieutenant-governor of the decision of the Half-breeds. It was the seventh of October. The committee had completed its work of uniting the people. Riel set about his task promptly and wrote as follows:

...As several trustworthy persons have been requested to inform you, the answer of the Métis has been that of faithful subjects. Several companies have already been organized, and others are in the process of formation. Your Excellency may rest assured that, without being enthusiastic, we have been devoted. So long as our services continue to be required, you may rely on us.

Riel wrote his signature, followed by Ambroise Lépine. Pierre Parenteau made his mark. The letter was placed in the hands of a messenger for prompt delivery to Archibald.⁷¹ When Archibald had read its contents he knew that regardless of which Fenians might be lurking in the

border area or elsewhere, the danger to Manitoba no longer existed. There would be no uprising of the Half-breeds.

News that came in from other quarters certainly left no room for complacency. Within twenty-four hours of the departure of Irvine and the companies from the Fort it was discovered that someone had spiked one of the best guns.⁷² Then a letter came in from Major Irvine, in camp with the troops at St. Norbert. Irvine had written it at 3:30 Sunday morning, enclosing reports from Pembina about the renewed possibility of a raid. Irvine asked for 150 men as reinforcements for his force, and suggested that Bedson, presently at the Stone Fort, be in command of them.⁷³ Similar reports of an impending invasion had reached Winnipeg, and there was considerable excitement there. No doubt similar reports had reached the French parishes. Archibald had a suspicion that someone was getting unduly perturbed about gossip in Pembina, and he said as much in his reply to Irvine. However, he sent a message asking Bedson to come to Fort Garry, and he alerted McDonald at the Fort.⁷⁴

As he scribbled a reply to Riel to be put into good form by his private secretary, Archibald did not know it but he was at the pinnacle of his career as Lieutenant-governor of Manitoba. He also did not know that he was about to make what the "loyal" party in Manitoba considered to be the fatal mistake of his career.

"You may say to the people," he wrote, "on whose behalf you write, that His Excellency is much gratified to receive the assurance which he anticipated in his communication with the Revd Père Ritchot, and which your letter conveys, and that he will take the earliest opportunity to transmit to His Excellency the Governor General this evidence of the loyalty and good faith of the Métis of Manitoba.

His Excellency will be pleased to be furnished, as soon as possible, with a nominal list of the persons in each parish, who desire to

enroll for active service in the present emergency. His Excellency will rely upon their readiness to come forward the moment they receive notice.⁷⁵

As it turned out there was no need to send "notice" to the Half-breeds to mobilize. The news of an impending raid had reached the committee, and the machinery it had put in place soon did the rest. During the afternoon the Half-breeds began to assemble in the large open space along the Red River in front of St. Boniface Cathedral.⁷⁶ Estimates of their number vary considerably, but there is good reason to believe the Hon. Marc Girard,⁷⁷ who estimated that there were between 400 and 500, "one-third" of them mounted and the "greater part" of them armed.⁷⁸ Riel, Ambroise Lépine and Pierre Parenteau were in command. The Hon. Joseph Royal, speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and the Hon. Marc Girard, the provincial treasurer, were asked to go over to the Lieutenant-governor's residence and inform Archibald that the Métis wished to meet him and offer their services in the present emergency. Archibald asked where it would be best to do this, and Girard recommended the other side of the river where the men were gathered. Archibald agreed to do this, not wishing for any ugly incidents.⁷⁹

Girard and Royal then returned to St. Boniface by rowboat and told the Métis leaders that the Lieutenant-governor was on his way. Archibald asked Captain McDonald, in command at the Fort, to accompany him. McDonald and a small mounted escort of soldiers from the Fort rode with Archibald to the river and crossed by ferry. When Archibald and McDonald came near the leaders of the Métis troops Girard announced to them that the assembled men were ready to go to the front to defend their country. All was quiet in anticipation of Archibald's answer. Archibald replied by thanking them for their offer and expressing his satisfaction at being able to meet them. The troops then fired a "feu de joie". The activity at St. Boniface had been noticed by people from Fort Garry, and a crowd had gathered on the west bank. When the

salute was fired and the Métis soldiers cheered, this crowd joined in the cheering. The tension broken, it was becoming a joyous occasion.⁸⁰

By this time Archibald had dismounted, and was ready to be made acquainted with the leaders of the Métis force. Girard later told how he had decided, while in the rowboat, that it would be just as well not to mention Riel's name when making the introductions. Accordingly he introduced Riel to Archibald as the man whom the Half-breeds had "chosen as their chief for the occasion".⁸¹ Archibald and Riel shook hands. Mr. Dubuc then introduced Ambroise Lépine and Pierre Parenteau, calling them by name, and saying that they were prominent men.

Archibald shook hands with them both.⁸² Riel then addressed the Lieutenant-governor on behalf of all the men present, saying that "he was there with his friends to offer their services in defence of their country against all enemies," and asking him to accept their services. Archibald made a short speech, thanking him warmly for that offer of service and assuring him that it was received with great pleasure. The short meeting had taken some fifteen minutes.⁸³ Another "feu de joie" and cheers for the Lieutenant-governor and it was all over. Details of the use of the troops would follow consultation after the most recent reports from the front had been studied.

It is not possible to contemplate this meeting by the Red River without being deeply moved by it. The raid could not succeed, now that the French-speaking Half-breeds had followed their promises with mobilization. Archibald knew this, and could well feel satisfaction with his - and Riel's - success. He well knew, too, that he was among men who were, morally, premier and members of his cabinet. But for broken promises and distant circumstances having nothing to do with Manitoba, the men present should have headed a vigorous, viable government suited to the needs of the people of the new province, a government with an élan of its own of a kind that none of Manitoba's first provincial governments could have.

There was little time for reflection, still less for euphoria. Men had volunteered their services, and arrangements would have to be made to take care of them. On returning to the Fort Captain McDonald gave orders to have the barracks prepared for immediate occupation.⁸⁴ The order was given to Lieutenant E.H.G.G. Hay, who was in command of the St. Andrews Company.⁸⁵ Hay had been watching with a field-glass the proceedings so recently concluded on the opposite side of the river.⁸⁶ Historians have not recorded what he said to McDonald, but Hay went immediately to the Lieutenant-governor and informed him that "if it was to accommodate the men [Archibald] had just left he would lay down his arms first." He was supported in this by Captain Newcomb of the Poplar Point Company.⁸⁷ Archibald reminded Hay that he was an officer in the Queen's service and sworn to do his duty. Lieutenant Hay said that he was "aware of the fact, but that before he would execute the order just given to accommodate such men as Riel and Lépine, he and every man of his company would lay down their arms". Archibald had no choice but to yield the point, and asked Hay if he would object to Pascal Breland with his mounted scouts. Hay replied that no exception would be taken to "loyal men". The interview then came to an end and the barracks were prepared.⁸⁸

Here we have seen again the "loyalist" mentality in action, trumpeting loyalty to the skies in time of peace and arrogating to itself the right to decide who is loyal in an emergency. Like Denison in July of 1870 Hay and Newcomb defied the civil authorities and bragged about it later.

Archibald was soon to hear much more from the "loyal men".

¹ J.B. Pritchett, "The So-Called Fenian Raid on Manitoba in 1871", in *CHR*, Vol. 10, 1929, 25.

² Pritchett, *op. cit.*, 27; See also Saskatchewan Archives, George Young, Historical Papers No. 2, "The Fenian Raid of October 1871 into Manitoba", 2.

³ Pritchett, *op. cit.*, 33.

⁴ Pritchett, *op. cit.*, 37.

⁵ Pritchett, *op. cit.*, 38.

⁶ *PLM News-Letter*, April 1, 1871.

- ⁷ NLC Manitoba Liberal, November 3, 1871.
- ⁸ George Young, *op. cit.*, 21.
- ⁹ Archibald to Macdonald, Oct. 9, 1871. See "Report...1874", 156.
- ¹⁰ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, 140.
- ¹¹ In Cartier's letter of May 23, 1870.
- ¹² PAC MG 26A, Vol. 187-8, Macdonald Papers, Archibald to Macdonald, Oct. 7, 1871.
- ¹³ USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24, Roll 1, clippings from the Manitoba Liberal, October 11, 1871.
- ¹⁴ PAC Macdonald Papers, MG 26A1(a), Vol. 61A, Archibald to Macdonald, Oct. 13, 1871.
- ¹⁵ Gilbert McMicken's letters to Macdonald have survived. Also, in 1888, he prepared a booklet, "The Abortive Fenian Raid on Manitoba", incorporating his letters and his memories of the incident: H.S.S.M., Transaction No. 32, - Season 1887-8, Hon. Gilbert McMicken, "The Abortive Fenian Raid on Manitoba" (afterwards "Abortive").
- ¹⁶ USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24, Roll 1, has correspondence relative to this.
- ¹⁷ "Abortive", 1ff.
- ¹⁸ PAC MG 26A, Vol. 61, McMicken to Macdonald, Sept. 27, 1871.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*; "Abortive", 1-2. Boyd had accompanied his wife, then on her way to England, as far as St. Paul, Minnesota. See Manitoban, Sept. 16, 1871.
- ²⁰ "Abortive", 2; McMicken to Macdonald, Sept. 29, 1871.
- ²¹ "Report...1874", Taché's deposition, 48.
- ²² A.H. de Trémaudan, "Louis Riel and the Fenian Raid of 1871", in CHR, Vol. IV, 1923, 133-6.
- ²³ A.H. de Trémaudan, *op. cit.*, 133-6.
- ²⁴ McMicken to Macdonald, Sept. 29, 1871; "Abortive", 2-3.
- ²⁵ "Report...1874", Taché's deposition, 53.
- ²⁶ "Abortive", 3.
- ²⁷ McMicken to Macdonald, October 5, 1871; In 1888 McMicken gave the figure as five hundred dollars. See page 4, "Abortive".
- ²⁸ McMicken to Macdonald, Oct. 5, 1871; "Abortive", 7.
- ²⁹ McMicken to Macdonald, Oct. 13, 1871.
- ³⁰ McMicken to Macdonald, Oct. 5, 1871.
- ³¹ "Abortive", 7.
- ³² "Abortive", 7-8.
- ³³ McMicken to Macdonald, Oct. 5, 1871.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ "Report...1874", Ritchot's deposition, 89-90; Archibald's deposition, 143, 150, 151.
- ³⁶ A.H. de Trémaudan, *op. cit.*, 136.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.* This reference to Bruce would seem to be the first indication of a serious difference of opinion between Métis on the subject of the Raid.
- ³⁸ "Report...1874", Ritchot's deposition, 90.
- ³⁹ The Manitoban gives the announcement of the postponements. See issues for July 1, August 5, 19, 26, 1871.
- ⁴⁰ Archibald to Macdonald, July 2, 1871.
- ⁴¹ "Report...1874", Ritchot's deposition, 91.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Watt's letter to D.A. Smith, written on October 5, is in "Report...1874", 144. His sworn statement is in Rev. George Young, Manitoba Memories, 214-6.
- ⁴⁵ USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24, Roll 1, Taylor to Davis, Nov. 21, 1871.
- ⁴⁶ Archibald stated that Riel had attended a meeting at White Horse Plains "about a week before the invasion". See "Report...1874", 146.
- ⁴⁷ Archibald received a report of this meeting. See "Report...1874", 148.
- ⁴⁸ de Trémaudan, *op. cit.*, 137.
- ⁴⁹ George Young, *op. cit.*, 4.
- ⁵⁰ USNARS, Taylor Papers, clipping from the Manitoba Liberal, Oct. 18, 1871. See Hill, History, 588.
- ⁵¹ Manitoban, Oct. 21, 1871.
- ⁵² Fort Garry is as far north as the north line of township 10. American Consul J.W. Taylor gave the distance as 68 miles; Taylor to Davis, Nov. 21, 1871.
- ⁵³ "Abortive", 7.
- ⁵⁴ NLC, Liberal, Sept. 27, 1871; Manitoban, Oct. 7, 1871.

- ⁵⁴ de Trémandan, op. cit., 138, footnote, 16.
- ⁵⁵ de Trémandan, op. cit., 138-9.
- ⁵⁶ "L'Invasion Féénienne au Manitoba", Diary of J.B. Proulx, in RHAE, Vol. XVII, No. 2, Sept. 1963, 261.
- ⁵⁷ George Young, op. cit., 5-6.
- ⁵⁸ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 77.
- ⁵⁹ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, Irvine to Archibald, October 5, 1871, 143.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 77.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ George Young, op. cit., 6-7.
- ⁶⁴ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 77.
- ⁶⁵ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, 141.
- ⁶⁶ "Abortive", 9; E.B. Osler, The Man Who Had To Hang - Louis Riel, 142.
- ⁶⁷ George Young, op. cit., 4-7. See also 9.
- ⁶⁸ All were in Mulvey's company. See the pay list in PAC RG9 IIF7, Vol. 3, "Fenian Raid Companies". Archibald mentioned all three in connection with the Dec. 13, 1871, raid on Riel's home. See Archibald to Macdonald, Dec. 13, 1871, and Dec. 16, 1871.
- ⁶⁹ de Trémandan, op. cit., 140-1.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, 147. Another translation of it can be found in A.H. de Trémandan, op. cit., 142.
- ⁷² PAC MG 26A1(a), Vol. 61A, Macdonald Papers, Archibald to Macdonald, Oct. 13, 1871; see also "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, 141.
- ⁷³ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, Irvine to Archibald, Oct. 8, 144.
- ⁷⁴ "Report...1874", 145.
- ⁷⁵ "Report...1874", Ritchot's deposition, Archibald to L. Riel, A. Lépine, Pierre Parenteau, Oct. 8, 1871, 91-2.
- ⁷⁶ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, "Memorandum connected with the Fenian invasion", 141; C.S.P. 1872 (No. 26), 7, Archibald to Howe, Oct. 9, 1871.
- ⁷⁷ Estimates vary from the "100" of the hostile Manitoba Liberal, Oct. 11, McMicken's "some 200", Archibald's "200 and upwards", C.S.P. 1872 (No. 26), letter of Oct. 9, to Girard's figure of "400 to 500". Girard probably had the best opportunity to know how many were present.
- ⁷⁸ "Report...1874", Girard's deposition, 180.
- ⁷⁹ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, 141.
- ⁸⁰ "Report...1874", Girard's deposition, 180.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ "Report...1874", Archibald's deposition, 142.
- ⁸⁴ Robert Hill, History, 345.
- ⁸⁵ PAC RG9 IIF7, Vol. 3, "Fenian Raid Companies".
- ⁸⁶ Hill, op. cit., 346-7.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid; PAC RG9 IIF7, Vol. 3, "Fenian Raid Companies".
- ⁸⁸ Hill, op. cit., 346.

The Aftermath

Lieutenant Edward Henry George Gunson Hay¹ had excellent credentials as one of the "loyal men", and no doubt he was completely sincere in his belief that only he and his party were loyal. A Yorkshireman² by birth, he belonged to the St. Andrews group which had planned to extend a warm welcome to Lieutenant-governor-designate McDougall in October of 1869.³ In later years he told a biographer that he had opposed the Métis "movement", "contending that everything desired could be obtained by constitutional means".⁴ He was a member of the "General Council for the Force"⁵ which had met at Kildonan under John C. Schultz's leadership in February of 1870, and like others he must bear his share of responsibility for the deaths of Sutherland and Parisien. He was certainly in no position to assume a "holier-than-thou" attitude with anyone in the new province of Manitoba. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia,⁶ and was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba for St. Andrews South.⁷ What he thought gave him a license to refuse to obey orders has not been recorded, unless he really did think, like so many loyalists, that he was above the law. His part in the organization of the St. Andrews Company⁸ should have taught him the duties of an officer in the Queen's service. There was nothing in the Queen's regulations that gave a lieutenant in a company a part in the making of government policy, and yet that is precisely what he was presuming to do. On the other hand Archibald, the civil authority in the province, had conferred with McDonald, the senior available military officer, and had agreed upon a course of action. His constitutional position was impeccable. Where community support for Archibald's action was concerned, the case was equally clear. Unless the memory of E.H.G.G. Hay, M.P.P., was very impaired indeed,⁹ he must have remembered that the Legislative Assembly of his province had debated and defeated his own motion calling for an investigation into the events of 1869-

1870 by a vote of fourteen to five.¹⁰ Clearly a majority in the Assembly was not prepared to pass any judgment whatever, certainly none of censure, on the part played in them by Riel, Lépine and Parenteau. It is possible that Hay did not personally like the three Métis leaders. If so, was he justified in allowing his personal likes and dislikes to come between him and his performance of his duties as an officer? Did his conduct mean that he also did not like the several hundred other men who had volunteered their services and were now awaiting further orders? If so, did he not like them because they were provisionals or because they were Half-breeds?¹¹

We are entitled to ask these questions because insubordination – a serious offense on the part of an officer at any time – is of unusual interest here. It may be that we should ask instead if Hay would have preferred to see Archibald alienate the men on the other side of the river. Was he hoping that a Red River civil war – incipient for so many months and held in check only by Half-breed self-control – would erupt into the real thing? Did he secretly wish to continue on a Red River battlefield the fight he had lost on the floor of the Assembly? These are difficult questions to answer. It may be, however, that we can receive some hints as we examine the behavior of other men soon to be in much the same position as Hay.

When last noticed, the men under Irvine's command were in camp at St. Norbert. Early in the morning of Sunday, October 8, Irvine sent an urgent message to Archibald asking for reinforcements, since news of an impending raid had come in.¹² George Young, in Captain Kennedy's Artillery,¹³ has told how he was "relieving sentries" when three scouts rode into camp, reporting that "the French had risen and that the Fenians had left North Pembina and were not far off".¹⁴ The force was quickly awakened and marched on south, having been reinforced by a company under de Plainval with two officers and thirty men, twelve of them mounted.¹⁵ Irvine took his force as far south as Leroque's, twenty-two miles from Fort Garry. There, about

noon,¹⁶ he received the message that the American troops “had turned the Fenians out of the province”. The likelihood was that any further raid attempted would be from the vicinity of St. Joe. Irvine paused briefly at Leroque’s with his force, leaving at 2 p.m. the next day, the 9th, to return to Fort Garry.¹⁷ Cold weather had improved marching conditions,¹⁸ and the force was able to make the return journey in just a little less than a day’s march, arriving at the Fort at 1:30 p.m. on the 10th.¹⁹ George Young told how as they neared the junction of the rivers the rumor reached them that Riel and his men had got between them and the Fort, and they would now have to fight to get there.²⁰ Charles Napier Bell gave more details many years later in a letter to a Winnipeg newspaper:

The writer...well remembers the excitement in the military camp when a courier rode in and stated that French half-breeds [sic] in considerable numbers had ridden north on the east side of the river and were apparently making preparations to cross the Red River into the village of Winnipeg. The English-speaking soldiers clamored to be led back to Winnipeg as they were much more suspicious and afraid of the French half-breeds [sic] than of the contemptible little Fenian force. Certainly the soldiers entertained no great opinion of the “loyalty and usefulness” referred to by G. A. Lépine in his present letter.²¹

Another report came that “the Governor had accepted Riel’s offer, made at this absurd date, and had actually shaken hands with Louis Riel, the murderer and twice rebel”. Then, Young observed,

Canada, at that moment, was very near being disgraced by a mutiny of her Citizen Soldiery on Active Service, and of witnessing the queer spectacle of one part of the Governor’s force making private war on another part, but wisdom prevailed, both in the Fort and among Riel’s controlling friends, for he and his men were removed out of sight and view, before the returning troops came to the Forks of the Rivers.²²

Major Irvine stated in his report that he could not “speak too highly of the behavior of the men throughout.”²³ However, it seems clear that they were often nearly out of control and sometimes

perilously close to mutiny. Archibald was evidently not being careless with his language when he described them as an "armed mob".²⁴

Have we met them before, these "loyal men", so quick to clamor, so prone to mutiny because a Lieutenant-governor had shaken hands with Half-breeds? We have, indeed, met many of them. Their names are in our country's records. One of them, J.H. Stokes, had been with the crew that, under Thomas Scott's leadership, had struck against Snow in the fall of 1869. Eight of them were taken prisoner in the Schultz houses incident. Forty-four of them had come to Manitoba as Volunteers with the Ontario and Quebec Rifles. One had been among the voyageurs accompanying that Force. Two of them were named in the inquiry as pursuers of Elzéar Goulet. P.G. Laurie, Schultz's News-Letter editor was one of them. Another, Edward Armstrong, was described by the Manitoba Liberal as "aged", and it may well be that he and James Farquharson, along with George Young and his father the Rev. George Young, were the only ones in the two companies to have been in Manitoba longer than two years. The rest were men whose names can be found in the pay lists but are otherwise unknown to us.²⁵ These last may well have given the force what little stability it had.

The feelings remembered and expressed by Bell and Young so many years later received prompt expression at the time in the columns of the Manitoba Liberal. Mulvey and Laurie had both been with the force under Irvine's command but, unlike Le Métis, which had to miss an issue because printers were out riding patrol,²⁶ the Liberal must have had help who stayed behind and set up a number of columns for publication on the 11th. When it appeared that day the Liberal had no fewer than six articles on the so-called Fenian Raid.²⁷ One of them was to be the most influential ever written by Stewart Mulvey, setting the tone, both for the criticism of

Archibald and for a dominant historical theme with regard to the raid. Entitled "The Last Straw", the article consisted of only six sentences:

Sunday evening the 8th of October will be a memorable day in the history of Manitoba. And that day the Governor committed the greatest blunder he ever did since he came here, and heaven knows he has many to account for when the day of reckoning comes. But this last and greatest insult to THE LOYAL PEOPLE [emphasis mine], who are now the only support of his tottering government, is too much to bear. That he should go out publicly in the face of day and hold a meeting with Riel, Lépine and about a hundred of their followers and treat with them as if they were the most devoted of Her Majesty's subjects, seems to be so incredible that we could not have believed it possible had we not seen it with our own eyes.

That the whole proceeding is a trick on the part of the Riel faction to get pardoned is plain as noon day, but that any man of common sense could be induced by even the smiling Girard and polite Royal to outrage the whole community in such a manner as the Governor did Sunday afternoon is only another instance of the utter incapacity of the man who has been trying to govern Manitoba for the last year, and it shews plainly that no confidence can be placed in the present government. But more of this again.²⁸

Mulvey returned to the charge in the Liberal for October 18 in an article entitled "The Governor and Riel". Mulvey had had time to reflect:

We briefly referred in our last to the fact that on Sunday afternoon, the 8th inst., the Lieutenant-Governor was sent for by Louis Riel, who with about 100 of the gang who aided him in his villainies of '69 and '70 took up a position on the east side of the Red River, opposite Fort Garry. The summons was duly and expeditiously answered by His Honor's appearance among them, and in the blaze of day, and within a gunshot of the spot where Thomas Scott was murdered, the Queen's representative shook hands with the murderer. It will be seen from other columns that Riel, on hearing O'Donoghue's failure at Pembina, decided instead of going to join that worthy as was his original intention, on offering his services to Archibald. The acceptance of his services was in entire accordance with the Lieutenant-Governor's policy, but no one supposed that he would have the hardihood to carry it to such an extreme. Such, however, to his lasting disgrace as a Briton, was the case. This man and his followers were the same who fled at

the approach of the troops last year, and whom the gallant Wolseley characterized as banditti. We cannot find language to express the deep humiliation created in the minds of the people who witnessed or heard of this climax of insult to LOYAL MEN [emphasis mine] in the Province. We trust that the attention of the Governor General will be drawn to this, the last and greatest atrocity committed by his Lieutenant in this part of the Dominion. The feeling of disgust and contempt which his conduct has created will render it entirely impossible for Mr. Archibald to conduct the government of the country either with pleasure to himself or with the faintest chance of satisfaction to the people; and we trust the Governor General will have sufficient influence with Cartier to get him to replace our Lieutenant-Governor with some one who, if of equal incapacity with him, will at least refrain from offering such gross insults to our people.²⁹

With the tunnel vision of the true fanatic Mulvey had predicted what was to be Cabinet policy on the so-called Fenian Raid.

Here a fact must be reiterated before we proceed with our study. The wonder is not that the Half-breeds made a show of force at St. Boniface on Sunday, October 8, when the danger was known to be over by those at Pembina. The wonder is rather that the Half-breeds assembled at all, anywhere, to give their support to Archibald and the Canadian connection. They had very good reason to do otherwise. If we accept that people have a right to change governments on the basis of performance we must acknowledge that O'Donoghue was justified in expecting that the Half-breeds would join him if he appeared at the border with a force. That their response to Riel and the Association and to Archibald's proclamation was not prompt enough to be, in Archibald's words, "graceful",³⁰ is simply a testimony to the political sagacity of men who had been beaten, belted, clubbed and dragged in the vicinity of Winnipeg-Fort Garry. The men were wiser, politically, than their leaders. If either Archibald or Riel had, in October of 1871, the wisdom to see where the political underpinnings of the Macdonald administration were, neither would take the step that logic dictated. Unfortunately for the Half-breeds, both Archibald and

Riel were so dedicated to a broad Canadianism that they could not see that other men in high places would place their priorities elsewhere. This shortcoming would lead the one to resignation in disrepute, the other to paid exile and the mental asylum.

One of those who could see what Archibald and Riel could not see was Stewart Mulvey, editor of the Liberal. We must now become acquainted with this gentleman. He had been in Manitoba just thirteen months, having come to Manitoba with the Ontario Rifles.³¹ Born in County Sligo, Ireland, in 1834, Mulvey had spent fourteen years teaching in Ontario. Worshipful Master of Loyal Orange Lodge No. 1307, he had in July led "75 or 80" members to Armstrong's Grove, Point Douglas, in Manitoba's first Orange "walk".³² In the temporary absence of John Christian Schultz he was, in October of 1871, at the very centre of what Gilbert McMicken called the "arrogance, impudence and violence of the Orange party and other extremists"³³ in opposition to Archibald and his policies. His reward would come in due course.³⁴ There can be no doubt of his political perspicacity at this time in Manitoba's stormy early months.

Several observations are in order concerning Mulvey's strategic use of these two editorials. In the first he wrote of seeing Archibald shake hands with Riel "with our own eyes". Mulvey, of course, did not and could not see the handshaking, being with his company on the way to "Leroque's", near St. Agathe, at the time it occurred. He may have spoken of it with Lieutenant Hay or with a typesetter – we cannot be certain. We do know that after the first article appeared in print Mulvey wrote to Archibald asking about the incident – whether he had indeed crossed the river, addressed the Half-breeds, accepted their services, shaken hands with Riel. We know too that Archibald composed a long reply, but that McMicken dissuaded him

from sending it, urging that he instead prepare a proclamation for the general public.³⁵ Archibald did this, and the only trace of his original intention may be seen in this sentence:

If among these people there were – and I believe there were – some persons whose exceptional position might have led O'Donoghue to look for their support, it only adds to the value of the demonstration, and removes the last hope of the miscreants who have invaded your soil, that they would receive sympathy or aid from any class of the population.³⁶

In the second article Mulvey did not claim to have seen the incident. The first article referred to the “loyal people” as being the “only support of [Archibald’s] tottering government”. This claim is not repeated in the second, a bit of sober reflection having no doubt shown that it was stretching credibility a bit. Both accounts develop the theme that Riel’s volunteering the services of his people was a trick to gain a pardon for himself, and that Archibald was naïve enough – or treasonable enough – to cooperate in the effort. The second article is careful to repeat the list of Riel’s alleged sins: the murder of Scott; the flight at the approach of Wolseley’s troops; the delay until O’Donoghue’s failure was certain before offering Métis help to Archibald. It was important for Mulvey and his party – in the absence of John Christian Schultz³⁷ – to allow no suggestion that either Riel’s or Archibald’s actions were done in the country’s interest to reach the Globe before their own version did. They were assisted in this by the fact of human nature that a rising prevented, like the violence that did not take place at Rivière aux Ilets de Bois, does not necessarily reflect credit on those who do not rise. Ironically, Mulvey’s success in this was assured when the French-language Le Métis had to miss an issue due to the mobilization of Half-breed companies to repel the raid.³⁸ The second article, too, carries the suggestion that Archibald must be recalled, and there is the hint – this article is for Toronto consumption – that Cartier is the one with whom the Governor General must have influence if Archibald is to be recalled.

The situation in Manitoba in early October of 1871 was not unlike that in the Red River Settlement in March of 1870. Archibald, like Riel, had managed to consolidate the support of a majority in the province, and he should have been able to press forward with his plans, perhaps even call the oft-postponed session of the Legislature. Once again, however, events in Ontario were to impinge upon the working of government in the new province. Mulvey's editorial, "The Last Straw", was published in the Globe on October 25, and soon every Orange lodge in Ontario – long busy ringing "the changes" on the "murder of Scott"³⁹ – was demanding that Archibald be censured or recalled. In early November, not long after the publication of Mulvey's editorial, Joseph Howe, the secretary of state for the provinces, wrote Archibald a long letter giving him basic information on the amnesty, on the political facts of life in Ontario and upon the way the Cabinet viewed the handshaking incident. "Now no such amnesty was ever promised," Howe asserted. "It was never asked in any formal shape, and if it had been it most certainly would have been refused by this government. There is no doubt that M. Richot [sic] and Bishop Taché were very anxious to obtain it, and that a large number, perhaps a majority of the Lower Canada [sic] members might have favored such a policy, but at no time, particularly after the murder of Scott, could this government have entered upon such a step without throwing into opposition EVERY SUPPORTER THEY HAVE [emphasis mine] from Ontario. This would have been the result had the Cabinet united on the policy. But they would not have been united. Nearly if not all the English section would have retired had any attempt been made to force that policy upon them."⁴⁰ Howe then went on to explain this phenomenon:

That there is in Ontario a very large body of Orangemen who felt this act the "murder" of Scott as a personal wrong and insult was no slight element of disturbance in a calm consideration of the matter. Upon the support of this body, powerful from organization and fervid religious feeling[,] Sir John Macdonald and his friends mainly rest for support. There was not a lodge in Ontario in which

the changes were not rung upon the murder of Scott, and a desire for revenge, if justice could not be got, has been the prevalent feeling and uppermost thought of the entire organization for the last two years.

Howe then turned to the Cabinet view of what Howe called "the Fenian invasion":

O'Donogue [sic], Riel's co-conspirator and friend, invades the Province at the head of a band of ruffians, meanwhile Riel gets the Half-breeds together, puts himself at their head, and forms an army of observation. All the English and Loyal people turn out, support the Government and march to repel the invaders. Riel for five days, maintains his position of neutrality, ready to fall upon the rear of the Canadians if O'Donogue [sic] drives them in, or to plunder Winnipeg should they be badly beaten. This is his attitude, visible to all men, and he never changes it, until as McMicken⁴¹ tells us he was "Euchred"⁴² – until his scouts brought him word that O'D[onoghue] had failed, that his force had been routed and his person seized by United States troops.

"All this would have been funny enough," Howe went on, "and we should have had a hearty laugh throughout the Dominion had the 'Army of observation' been left 'alone in their glory'. Had they come to you a coldly civil answer would have been all they deserved.

But that you should go to them, overlook their strange conduct, and shake hands with Riel at their head, has excited a feeling of astonishment and regret everywhere, except perhaps in the Province of Quebec. The newspapers of course have been busy with this strange event. I am not bound to notice what appears in them, and of course do not, but, on the floor of Parliament, it will be different. We must meet the question there, and I should not be much surprized [sic] if an angry debate is followed by a very large desertion of our Ontario supporters. At the elections, which must come off in June next, this handshaking will cost more seats in that region or I am much mistaken.

"I write thus frankly," Howe explained, "and if there are any new facts or explanations, that they may be furnished without delay. Write as I have done, unofficially, that you may have the greater freedom."⁴³

When he had read Howe's letter two things must have seemed obvious to Archibald. One was that his resignation would soon be expected, if not actually requested. The other was that there was little point in sending more "facts or explanations". He had written long letters both to Macdonald and to Howe, giving details of the raid itself and of the state of affairs upon which it was predicated. The Cabinet would have these explanations now. He had a great deal to do besides write further details to men who gave his opinions – based on thirteen months of observation – no more weight than those of McMicken, who had been in Manitoba only a few days when he expressed them, and whose inability to speak French precluded his making any balanced judgment of what was going on in the province.⁴⁴

Archibald's experiences in the province had taught him that the real issue at stake in Manitoba was whether or not the people of the province were capable of managing their own affairs. Put in different terms the issue was responsible government. The Manitoba Act appeared to grant Manitoba's people responsible government. Howe had just made the claim in his letter:

...and yet it must be remembered that we have nobly condoned and pardoned, nay have we not rewarded, all the political offenses in the North-West. We have given the Community a free Constitution, and to the Half Breeds [sic] a million and a half [sic] of land, and all this in less than a year after the outbreak.

However, the government's policies were removing all meaning from the grant. The most obvious omission, of course, was the failure to declare a general amnesty for all the people of the North-West. This prevented the people from electing to the Legislature those who had their confidence and deprived them of the leadership of Riel and Lépine. And while broad national policy might be used to justify using Manitoba's lands "for purposes of the Dominion", there

was no excuse for the neglect to carry out the grant of 1,400,000 acres in any fashion whatever, let alone – again to quote Cartier – “as to meet the wishes of the Halfbreed [sic] residents.”

The unpleasant scene with E.H.G.G. Hay – like the one described by the Globe in July – had revealed to Archibald in stark silhouette the arrangement of political forces in Manitoba.⁴⁵ Archibald had to do what Manitoba’s tiny opposition wanted, while the men who had the confidence of the majority dared not appear in public. This was true, not because of factors in Manitoba – the debate in the Legislature had shown that – but because of what people in another province thought.

Immediately after the O’Donoghue raid crisis was over Archibald had written a long letter about the raid which, if he had Macdonald’s confidence, should have been all the explanation that was necessary. We have seen some of it before in another context, but it is also of interest to us here since it shows us the trend of Archibald’s thought:

Please show this letter to Mr. Aiken [sic]. He will find I did not overestimate the danger when I gave my reply to the Half-breed representatives.

Had my reply been other than it was you would at this moment have had a civil war on your hands, in addition to a Fenian Raid.

Whether the difference between a lot here and a lot there, in allocating the Half Breed [sic] claims, Whether the privilege of driving a few Métis off [f] the Banks of Rivière Aux Isles [sic] de Bois in order to people it with Orangemen, and Baptize it “the Boyne”, is worth the cost – judge for yourself.

Had I any doubts about the rights of the thing, you gave me hardly any alternative. You asked me to govern a country, containing 12,000 people, on the principles of Responsible Government. I am expected to proclaim a doctrine hateful to 10 out of 12, and from the other two I am to get a majority to sustain me. Pharaoh’s Brick without straw is nothing to this.

All this you ask me to do with an army of Eighty militia men, cooped up in a Fort requiring 150 to keep it decently safe.⁴⁶

Whatever Archibald thought or knew in October about the alignment of political forces in Ontario, there could be no secret about it after he had read Howe's letter of November 4th.

Archibald – in his reference to “Orangemen” and “the Boyne” had committed a very serious faux pas. He was not penitent about his views on responsible government, however, and he expressed them again in a letter to Howe about the January 1872 session of the Manitoba Legislature:

I took care when the House met that my speech should leave no chance to evade the question which **HAS SO EXERCISED THE PEOPLE OF ONTARIO** [emphasis mine].

The paragraph touching the Fenian raid was framed on purpose to challenge criticism and elicit an unmistakeable reply. You will see that the answer of each House, unanimously adopted, endorses my policy in empathetic terms. In neither House did the answer pass merely as a matter of courtesy. In both Houses the friends of the Government invited the opposition to express their opinion on any paragraph of the address that they might consider open to attack.

In the Assembly a resolution was moved in amendment, not finding fault with anything contained in the speech, but censuring the Government for **NOT HAVING IN THE ADDRESS REFERRED TO LANDS** [emphasis mine] – matters of fact, with which the Local legislatures [sic] have no right to deal. Even then, on an issue of their own choosing, which they had to go out of the speech to find, the opposition could muster only four votes to seventeen, while the various paragraphs of the speech were re-echoed by a unanimous vote, so that all the clamour of the opposition newspapers – all the violent agitation of discharged voyageurs and soldiers have ended in giving **IN THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE CAN CONSTITUTIONALLY BE HEARD** [emphasis mine] – a unanimous affirmation of the policy I have acted on. It seems to me **THAT THE PEOPLE HERE MUST BE ALLOWED TO BE JUDGES OF HOW TO MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS** [emphasis mine]. At all events this must be so till they cease to possess representative institutions. If they are to be **RESPONSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE OF OTHER PROVINCES** [emphasis mine] the members should be elected there. At all events one thing is clear, they should not be elected by the men to whom Parliament has given the franchise.

If the other doctrine is sound it should be your business, in dealing with these men, to erect **NOT HUSTINGS BUT GALLOWS** [emphasis mine]. You allow the electors to choose members, you allow the electors to make and unmake Ministries, but electors and members are to exercise their functions **WITH ROPES AROUND THEIR NECKS** [emphasis mine]. Was there ever before a responsible Ministry resting on a House, of whose constituents more than half were liable to be hanged or sent to the penitentiary? To hang all, or to hang a few to whom the rest are blindly devoted, is much the same thing so far as a responsible Ministry is concerned.

If then you cannot punish without recalling constitutional Government, what use is there in keeping up the pretence of calling these people outlaws. In my view you have to choose between **REVOKING RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT**, and **ADMITTING THAT YOU CANNOT GO BACK TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT FOR OFFENCES IN WHICH HALF THE POPULATION WERE IMPLICATED, COMMITTED BEFORE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCEDED** [emphasis mine].

When he wrote these words Archibald's resignation had already been sent in:

What I said in substance to you in my last, I afterwards put into formal shape and sent to the Premier.

That Archibald was completely convinced of the rightness of his stand was indicated by his closing sentences:

I am quite content to await the time when a healthier public opinion will take the place of the feverish excitement lately prevailing in some parts of the Dominion.

Meanwhile, let a different experiment be tried. At the end of a year of such a régime, it will be seen whether as proud a chronicle can be given of peace and progress as the one we have just recorded.

I trust in God it may be so, but it seems to me that unless you expect to 'gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles' you can hardly hope to carry on responsible government by inflicting death penalties on the leaders of a majority of the electors.⁴⁷

It is fortunate for our study that we can receive insight into Archibald's thinking on this issue from still another source. In early April of 1872 the Governor General, Sir John Young (now Lord Lisgar), wrote to Archibald, expressing surprise at his resignation and asking about the reasons for it. Archibald began his answer by saying that he had more than one reason. "First of all," he wrote, "I never wished to come here. I accepted the office only at the earnest instance of the Gov[ernmen]t and came then on the understanding that I was not to remain here over a year, and my acceptance of the office was not to stand in the way of a judicial appointment if any turned up that would suit me. My tastes led me to the Bench, the natural goal of a lawyer's ambition." "Secondly," Archibald went on, "the part I had to play here was rather difficult. Half our people had been in rebellion. In the eye of the law they were guilty of high treason, yet Parliament chose not only to give these people the elective franchise, but to confer Responsible Gov[ernmen]t on the country –

The public opinion of other Provinces called on me to treat these people as rebels. In the public opinion of this province they were patriots. I had to conduct my administration by men who possessed the confidence of the Assembly, - I could hardly hope to engage as Ministers any man who should have to proclaim it as his duty to hang the men whose votes had raised him to office. It was necessary, therefore, to choose between two alternatives. Either to let bygones be bygones, or to administer responsible Gov[ernmen]t in a new form, that of opposing, instead of carrying out the well understood wishes of the people.

Archibald described how he had "adopted the plan of a coalition" and had been "enabled to give a fair consideration to the claims of each portion" of the Manitoba population. In 1871 he had been sustained by a "steady vote" of "18 to 6", and in the early months of 1872 of "19 to 5". "The old residents of the country have no desire to open up past troubles – the difficulty in governing the Province is not here. If left alone, we could easily maintain peace and carry out our institutions." "But that does not seem to be the aim of Ontario," Archibald went on,

In that province the preservation of public peace within our borders seems to be nothing – the punishment of past offences everything. If I had taken the Ontario line when I came here we should have been ever since in a state of perpetual anarchy. No ministry could have stood an hour in the face of an adverse Assembly. The time of the Legislature would have been spent in passing all kind[s] of inflammatory Resolutions. The passions of the people on both sides would have been kept at fever heat – and last of all when the Fenian invasion took place we should have been in a frightful position.

Archibald then outlined the strategic position of the English-speaking portion of the province:

“We had then just 80 soldiers to garrison our Forts, and to protect half a continent. North and west we were hemmed in by impassible barriers. A thousand miles of lakes and rivers just on the point of freezing were between us and the Province from which assistance could come.

If we had driven all the French half breeds [sic] into the enemy’s army, the enemy’s frontier would have been advanced to the Assiniboine, and all communication with the rest of the world would have [been] closed to us while open to them. The troops who came from Collingwood⁴⁸ had as it was enough to contend with to get here without being frozen to death – suppose they had an active enemy, in addition to the frost and snow, I don’t pretend to say what would have been the result. – But of this I am sure, that if they had been lucky enough to reach Fort Garry, it would have been after exploits and prodigies, beside which the endeavors of Col. Wolseley’s soldiers would have been mere child’s play. How near we came to this, I shall not now say, but we had a narrow escape. If at this time our Internat[ional] relations with the U.S. are not complicated by a civil war in Manitoba, and the enemy sustained by Yankee Filibusters, I think I may say that it is in some measure due to the efforts I made to secure the adhesion of the French half-breeds [sic] to the Crown when their allegiance was trembling in the balance. Yet for this I have had to endure the diatribes of the *Globe*⁴⁹ and many other Ontario papers. Had the onslaught been confined to the journals of the opposition, I should not have cared much for it. But when some of the papers supporting the Gov[ernmen]t yielded to the storm, a dissenting vote undertook to vote a premium for the rekindling of Civil war in the Province, and friends of the Gov[ernmen]t sustained them, it was obvious to me THAT I COULD NO LONGER BE SERVICEABLE HERE [emphasis mine], and that it was my duty

to place my resignation in the hands of the Gov[ernment] and insist upon its acceptance....

"Should the Ontario Policy obtain the ascendancy...I tremble for the consequences.

But I do hope that wiser Councils will prevail, and that the men who are using the passions and prejudices of a portion of the people as a stepping stone⁵⁰ to power will, after the purposes of the moment have been secured, take a more enlarged view of the interests of the Dominion.⁵¹

Archibald was to learn in time that his hope was vain, and that the new nation he had helped to found had taken a wrong turn.

¹ PAM MG14 B79 File 9, Hay Papers, has the name in full.

² F.H. Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*, Vol. II, 483-4.

³ *Nor'Wester*, Oct. 26, 1869. At the meeting he spoke of the "rights of universal suffrage" and of McDougall's "foreign councillors".

⁴ Schofield, op. cit., 484; *Manitoban*, Feb. 12, 1872 in notes of debates in Assembly of Feb. 5, 1872.

⁵ "R. McC" in *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, April 2, 1870.

⁶ PAM, Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia.

⁷ R.G. MacBeth, *Romance*, 169.

⁸ PAC RG9 IIF7, Vol. 3, "Fenian Raid Companies", "Pay List of St. Andrew's Company". The company had just been organized, and was soon to have John C. Schultz as captain (*Volunteer Review*, Sept. 25, 1871).

⁹ Hay had injured himself in a fall from the roof of his mill in June of 1871. See the *News-Letter*, June 17, 1871.

¹⁰ See the *Manitoban*, April 29, 1871, for the debate of April 25, 1871.

¹¹ He did not like certain groups which came to settle in Manitoba. In his will he specified that no one of "German, Austria-Hungarian, Turkish or Bulgarian" origin was to fall heir to any of his assets. See Note 1, will dated March 15, 1918.

¹² "Report... 1874", Archibald's deposition, Irvine to Archibald, Oct. 8, 1871, 144.

¹³ PAC RG9 IIF7 Vol. 3, "Fenian Raid Companies", Pay list of Captain Kennedy's Company.

¹⁴ Saskatchewan Archives, George Young, Historical Paper No. 2, "The Fenian Raid of October 1871 into Manitoba", 5.

¹⁵ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 77.

¹⁶ George Young, op. cit., 8.

¹⁷ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 77. Leroque is probably correctly spelled Larocque (*Liberal*, Oct. 11, 1871).

¹⁸ George Young, op. cit., 8-9.

¹⁹ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 78.

²⁰ George Young, op. cit., 9.

²¹ PAM MG14 C23, Bell Papers, Box 4, File 11, letter of C.N. Bell to the *Free Press*, circa 1916, in reply to a letter written by G.A. Lépine and published March 7.

²² George Young, op. cit., 9.

²³ C.S.P. 1872 (No. 8), Report of Major Irvine, 78.

²⁴ "Report... 1874", Archibald's deposition, 142.

²⁵ PAC RG9 IIF7, Vol. 3, "Fenian Raid Companies" has both Mulvey's and Kennedy's pay lists.

²⁶ *Le Metis*, 19 Oct., 1871, has the apology and the explanations. The issue of Oct. 12 was missed.

²⁷ USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24 Roll 1, clippings from the *Liberal*, Oct. 11, 1871: "Fenians!", "For the Front", "From Pembina", "Position of the French", "Temporizing", "The Last Straw".

²⁸ USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24 Roll 1, clippings from the *Liberal*, Oct. 11, 1871: "The Last Straw".

- ²⁹ USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24 Roll 1, clippings from the Liberal, Oct. 18, 1871. The Rev. George Young used this article on pages 224 and 225 of Manitoba Memories. He omitted the words after "policy" down to "banditti". He then used the sentence beginning "We cannot find language..." and omitted the remaining sentences.
- ³⁰ "Report... 1874", Archibald's deposition, 146; Archibald to Macdonald, Oct. 9, 1871, 156.
- ³¹ Manitoba Library Association, Pioneers and Early Citizens of Manitoba, 166.
- ³² Manitoban, July 15, 1871.
- ³³ PAC MG26 A1(a), Vol. 61A, McMicken to Macdonald, Oct. 13, 1871.
- ³⁴ Manitoba Library Association, Pioneers and Early Citizens of Manitoba, 166. He was appointed Collector of Internal Revenue in 1873.
- ³⁵ PAC MG26 A1(a), Vol. 61A, McMicken to Macdonald, Oct. 13, 1871.
- ³⁶ "Report... 1874", Archibald's deposition, Proclamation of Oct. 13, 1871.
- ³⁷ Schultz was in Ontario at the time of the raid. See the Manitoban, Oct. 28, 1871, quoting from the Montreal Gazette for Oct. 2, 1871. Schultz had arrived in Montreal "Saturday", Sept. 30.
- ³⁸ Le Méris, 19 oct., 1871.
- ³⁹ PAC MG24 B29 Vol. 9, Howe to Archibald, Nov. 4, 1871.
- ⁴⁰ When Cartier wrote his letter to Granville advocating an amnesty for those involved in the Red River troubles, Sir Francis Hincks was the only cabinet minister to give him support: PRO CO42, Vol. 687, Cartier to Granville, June 30, 1870.
- ⁴¹ A letter that McMicken wrote to a friend just after the raid was inadvertently published in the Globe: Globe, Oct. 24, 1871.
- ⁴² According to Hoyle, Rules of Games, "if the making side fails to win three [tricks] it is 'euchred'". Euchre was a popular card game in the 1860s and 1870s. For the quotation see Globe, Oct. 24, 1871.
- ⁴³ PAC MG24 B29 Vol. 9, Howe to Archibald, Nov. 4, 1871.
- ⁴⁴ PAC MG26A Vol. 246, McMicken to Macdonald, Dec. 22, 1871.
- ⁴⁵ See the chapter, above, entitled "The Confrontation at Rivière Aux Ilets de Bois" for the context. The Globe, July 14 (Winnipeg, June 24) 1871, approvingly reported an incident in which a newly-arrived Canadian told the Lieutenant-governor that he was not going to abandon "improvements" he had made on land claimed by the Métis.
- ⁴⁶ PAC MG26A1(a) Vol. 61A, Archibald to Macdonald, Oct. 13, 1871. For the Biblical reference see Exodus, chapter 5.
- ⁴⁷ "Report... 1874", Archibald's deposition, Archibald to Howe, Jan. 20, 1872. For the Biblical reference see Matthew 7:16.
- ⁴⁸ Archibald here refers to the second Red River Expedition.
- ⁴⁹ The Globe's attacks began with the reproduction of Mulvey's editorial on October 25. Previous to that the Globe had charged that an effort was being made to obtain an amnesty for Riel (Globe, Oct. 20), but had not directed attacks at Archibald.
- ⁵⁰ This reference is obviously to Schultz, Mulvey and others at Fort Garry-Winnipeg.
- ⁵¹ PAC MG16 F.O. 5, Vol. 1427, Archibald to Lisgar, April 29, 1872.