

# REPORT

OF THE

## SELECT COMMITTEE

ON THE

### CAUSES OF THE DIFFICULTIES

IN THE

# NORTH-WEST TERRITORY

IN

1869-70.

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*PRINTED BY ORDER OF PARLIAMENT.*

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OTTAWA:

PRINTED BY I. B. TAYLOR, 29, 31, & 33, RIDEAU STREET.

1874.

REPORT  
SELECT COMMITTEE

## ORDER OF REFERENCE.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 1st April, 1874.

*Resolved*, That a Select Committee, composed of

Mr. SMITH, (Selkirk),	HON. MR. BLAKE,
Hon. Mr. CAMERON, (Cardwell),	Mr. MOSS,
Mr. BOWELL,	Mr. GEOFFRION,
Hon. Mr. ABBOTT,	Mr. MASSON,
Mr. JONES, (Halifax),	

be appointed to enquire into the causes of the difficulties which existed in the North-West in 1869 and 1870, and into those which have retarded the granting of the amnesty announced in the Proclamation issued by the late Governor General of Canada, Sir John Young; and, farther, to enquire whether, and to what extent, other promises of amnesty have been since made; with power to send for persons, papers and records.

Attest.

ALFRED PATRICK,  
Clerk of the House.

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Monday, 11th May, 1874.

*Ordered*, That the said Committee have leave to report from time to time.

Attest.

ALFRED PATRICK,  
Clerk of the House.

## REPORT.

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The Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to enquire into the causes of the difficulties in the North-West in 1869 and 1870, beg leave to report:—

That they have held thirty-seven sittings, and examined twenty-one witnesses, and they have been engaged diligently in prosecuting the enquiry since the reference was made to them.

That they have, as far as possible, taken the evidence separately under the three several heads of reference, viz.: First—the causes of the difficulties which existed in the North-West in 1869 and 1870. Secondly—the causes which retarded the granting of the amnesty, announced in the Proclamation of the Governor General of Canada, Sir John Young, now Lord Lisgar; and thirdly—also whether and to what extent other promises of Amnesty have ever been made.

That in conformity with their understanding of the meaning of the first head of the reference, they have endeavoured to limit the evidence taken under this head to the circumstances which occurred, or to the condition which existed, prior to the organized resistance to the entry of the Hon. William McDougall into the Territory, conceiving that at this point the difficulties themselves, into the history of which they are not authorized to enquire, had begun.

That they have examined several witnesses, and have received many important documents on this head as well as on the other heads referred to, and although they have thereby obtained much valuable information they have been unable to complete the evidence, as several important witnesses are absent in Europe and the North-west, and could not be brought before the Committee.

The Committee have also received evidence on the third head of the enquiry which, without being strictly applicable, seemed to bear upon the question whether any implied obligation to grant an amnesty had arisen from circumstances which did not constitute a direct promise of an amnesty.

The Committee report the evidence they have received both from the witnesses examined, and documents produced before them, and they leave it to the House to consider whether under the circumstances stated, any other steps shall be taken or whether the proceedings of the Committee shall terminate by this Report, and the evidence submitted herewith.

All which is respectfully submitted.

F. GROFFRION,  
Chairman.

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**ERRATA.**

- Page 59, On third line from bottom, for "Jas. Dubuc," read "Jos. Dubuc."  
 .. 61, In date of letter No. 39, for "1874," read "1873."  
 .. 65, In letter No. 49, "Father Lascomb," read "Father Lacombe."  
 .. 105, No. 125, in date of second extract, for "23rd February," read "22nd February."  
 .. 110, Report of Privy Council, dated June 4th, 1873, should be numbered 130.  
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The ostensible reason for the continuance of the original rising was the fact of Mr. McDougall remaining at Pembina, that indicating a persistence to take possession of the territory without the consent of the inhabitants. This greatly intensified the feeling of the people. The Council of Assiniboia took every means in their power to quiet the movement. Only two officers of the Hudson's Bay Company were on the said Council, which had a total of between fourteen and fifteen members. On this Council there were, among others, the Bishop of Rupert's Land, Archbishop Taché, and Messrs. Bannatyne, Fraser, Macbeth, Tait and Sutherland. These gentlemen were in no way connected with the Hudson's Bay Company.

Governor McTavish, Governor of the Council of Assiniboia, and Acting Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, in order to dissuade the people from a rising, issued a proclamation early in November. The Council of Assiniboia also sent for the leaders of the people. Messrs. Bruce and Riel endeavoured to explain the situation to them, and remonstrated with them on their conduct.

Mr. William Dease was considered to be one of the leaders among the French party.  
(Signed,) J. H. McTAVISH.

COMMITTEE ROOM,  
April 15th, 1874.

The Honorable H. L. LANGEVIN being called before the Committee, stated as follows:—

(A.)

*As to First Branch of Enquiry in the Order of Reference.*

I was a member of the Canadian Ministry up to November, 1873. I was Minister of Public Works for four years. I know nothing personally of the causes that led to the troubles in the North-West, as I was never there myself, but my belief is that there were different causes, viz.: One was the long rule of the Hudson's Bay Company, which, in my opinion, was unfavorable to the colonization of the country, and therefore not liked by the people of the North-West.

Another cause was, I believe, the inactivity of the Hudson's Bay Company's authorities, when the excitement began among the half-breeds. I believe that, if at that period the Company's authority had shown itself even by closing the gates of Fort Garry, these troubles would have been put a stop to.

Another cause, I believe, is the want of tact, and in certain cases the fanaticism of certain Government employes who, instead of shewing to the half-breeds that they were sent not to disturb them in the possession of their lands, went to work as if their ideas had been to deprive these people of their possessions.

Another cause of the trouble, I have no doubt, was the proclamation issued by the Honorable William McDougall, without authority, and before he took the oath as Lieutenant Governor of the Province.

As far as I can recollect, I think there was a communication upon the outbreak between the Government and Governor McTavish, with reference to the surveyors. I think it was in writing. I do not remember seeing the Governor here at Ottawa at that time. I do not remember any personal communication with him at the instance of the Colonial Office. Difficulties had arisen before the issuing of the proclamation. Some of the half-breeds were in arms.

## (B.)

*As to Second Branch of Enquiry in the Order of Reference.*

The Proclamation of Amnesty, dated December 6th, 1869, was issued long before the death of Thomas Scott, and when so issued, it certainly did not contemplate anything else than the illegal acts that had been committed up to the time of its issue.

The causes that have delayed the granting of an amnesty in accordance with that proclamation were,

1st: That circumstances were altogether changed when the death of Thomas Scott occurred. 2nd: That the granting of the amnesty in accordance with that proclamation, not pardoning the parties who might have been instrumental in causing the death of Scott, would not have satisfied the people who clamoured for an amnesty, and therefore would have been found useless in so far as the peace of the country and contentment of the people were concerned.

By the illegal acts above referred to, I mean the illegal possession of property, real or personal; also any violation of private rights up to that time. I think that the insurgents had, at the date of the proclamation, taken possession of Fort Garry.

I think that the proclamation was intended to cover all acts similar to those which, we understood, had been committed up to the time that the terms of the proclamation would be made known to the people of the country.

If at that period an organization of a Provisional Government had taken place, the proclamation was undoubtedly intended to cover that. I think we must have known that there was an organization of some kind.

The immediate and peaceable dispersion referred to in the proclamation did not take place. I do not think that the fact of non-compliance with this term was one of the causes influencing the want of any further action on the proclamation.

I do not know whether the proclamation was issued before or after the death of Parisien or Sutherland. It was not known to the Government when Bishop Taché left Ottawa for the North-West, whether the people had availed themselves of the offer to lay down their arms. They knew at that time that there was still an armed organization. I think, but am not sure, that they then knew it by the name of Provisional Government

## (C.)

*Third Branch.*

I am not aware of any promise of amnesty having been made by the Government of Canada further than that contained in the proclamation of 6th December, 1869, or of any promise by any member of the Government on behalf of the Government.

At the commencement of the meeting of Parliament in October last I had two interviews with a large number of the supporters of the Government from the Province of Quebec about the amnesty in connection with the troubles in the North-West territory. After exchanging our views and discussing the matter, I said to the gentlemen present, that if the amnesty was not granted within a reasonable time after the session of Parliament I would resign my seat as a member of the Government, and that my colleague, Hon. Mr. Robitaille, was ready to do, and would do the same. The reason why I thought I could take that course was that I had always thought that in order to give peace and content to the North-West a full amnesty would be required; that a full amnesty could not have been obtained as long as the excitement about the death of Thomas Scott was kept up; and that, in order to allay the feeling, and do all I could under the circumstances, I had induced one or two of the most influential friends of the present member for Provencber, to use their influence with him to prevent his coming to Ottawa and taking his seat.

I knew further, from His Grace Archbishop Taché, that he intended to work in the same direction as he had done all along, by preparing a memorial or petition to Her Majesty, giving all the reasons why a full amnesty should be granted, and that His Grace expected His Excellency the Governor General, as the representative of the Queen in

this country, to transmit that document and have it laid at the foot of the throne with such remarks as His Excellency would think proper.

I knew also that Sir John A. Macdonald, the first Minister, intended to go to England after the Session, and that he intended to represent to the Imperial authorities that this North-West question was an Imperial one which was causing trouble and disquietude in a portion of the Dominion; and that certainly the best interests of the Empire required that the Imperial Government should take up the matter, knowing as much, I thought that the Imperial Government having received the documents and representations above mentioned would certainly feel it their duty to act in the matter, and therefore the question would come to an early solution. Of course, I knew full well there were obstacles, and great obstacles, connected with the granting of that amnesty; but so convinced was I that the best interests of Canada required that this matter should be settled without delay, that although a full amnesty might not be granted at the time I mentioned, I was determined, as was also my colleague, Mr Robitaille, that by handing in our resignations we could bring about a decision. I knew full well that the representatives of the Province of Quebec were all of the same mind upon that matter. I had not at any time, nor, as far as I am aware, had any of my colleagues, made any promise of an amnesty to Archbishop Taché, Father Ritchot, or any other party. I do not know of anything of the kind, and this statement covers the whole ground since the 6th December, 1869. In every conversation I had with Archbishop Taché he always stated to me that Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald, when they received, on behalf of the Canadian Government, the delegates from the people of the North-West, had promised an amnesty, but on enquiry of my colleagues, Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald, I must say that they always told me that no such promise was made. Archbishop Taché continued to repeat the assertion I have referred to on many occasions after I had asked my colleagues, and they had told me that no such promise was made; and I see that Archbishop Taché renews the statement in a memorandum that has just been published, and gives documents from which he draws that inference.

I was aware from personal communication with Sir John A. Macdonald that he was about to visit England after the close of the Session, and intended to make the representations before mentioned. I became aware of this some weeks before the Session, but I cannot fix the date. It was during the summer. His health was not good, and he thought of going on that account apart from other considerations. If it had not been for the Fall meeting of Parliament I have no doubt he would have gone sooner, but of course Parliament meeting he had to remain. I suppose the subject of his intended visit to England and his making these representations came up in two or three conversations between him and me. I think I had a conversation with him at the period mentioned by me just now of the meeting with my friends. I saw him then a second time in order to ascertain whether I was right in regard to what I have just stated.

This was before I made the statement to my supporters and the interview took place with the view of my making that statement, and in order that I might be quite correct in what I understood to be Sir John A. Macdonald's intentions, and might make the statements upon that basis. He was aware that I was going to meet my friends. No particular time was then named as to the probable period of his visit to England. It was to take place a short time after the Session, not immediately, because after every Session of course the members of the Government have to look after the business arising out of the Session. It was understood that he would go as soon as possible, because his health was very bad at the time. He only stated the nature of the representations he proposed making to the Imperial Government to the extent which I have indicated, that is: That it was a matter with which we had nothing to do as a Government as it had occurred previous to the country coming into our hands; and that therefore it was a matter that should be dealt with by the Imperial authorities and not by us. I was aware that communications had taken place between the Canadian Government and the Imperial Government upon this point. For example, I was aware of that telegram which was sent by the Imperial to the Canadian Government prior to the proclamation. In fact, I

was aware of every communication that took place. I do not think any answer was given to a reply of the Imperial Government to a communication from the Canadian Government upon the subject of a memorial of the Legislature of Manitoba with reference to this amnesty. I think the answer from England was to the effect that the amnesty, with certain reservations, might be given on a certain advice being given elsewhere. There was no action taken on that, for the reason that we always contended that we had nothing to do as a Government here with the question of amnesty; that it was a question for them there, and that therefore we had not to deal with it. On the other hand, the fact that in our opinion only a partial amnesty would not meet the claim that was made, convinced us that it was useless for us to take any action or entertain any proposal of that kind. I do not think that an understanding was arrived at that this correspondence should not be carried on in writing, but that the subject should be further discussed on Sir John A. Macdonald's intended visit. I do not think there was any connection between that visit and the other matter. We determined to abandon any further negotiation with the Imperial Government, at all events for the present.

I believe I stated to those members of Parliament whom I met as I have already mentioned, the fact that Sir John Macdonald would go to England shortly, and that the question would be brought up in England by him. I believe I stated that he would leave for England shortly after the Session. Sir John knew perfectly well that I was to make that statement. I wanted to show to my friends that I had reasons for making that statement to them, and that I was acting in good faith towards them and the cause which we were advocating, and so I said, "My portfolio is there, with that of my colleague, Mr. Robitaille."

I was authorized by Sir John Macdonald to tell my friends what I did about his intended visit to England. I believe I did learn that at the time of the delegation from the people of the North-West, or the interview with Archbishop Taché, there was some discussion of the extension of the amnesty. As far as I can recollect, Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald told me, and I have no doubt others of our colleagues, that the question of amnesty had come up, and that the answer from them was that it was a matter with which we had nothing to do as a Government, inasmuch as the illegal acts for which the amnesty was required had been committed previous to Canada assuming, or being on the eve of assuming, the government of the country. This question came up with the delegates, Father Ritchot, Mr. Black and Mr. Scott. If I am not mistaken, the question of amnesty was one of the points which the delegates submitted to my two colleagues, Sir John and Sir George, and they discussed it among themselves. I am not sure that the discussion took place with Sir John Macdonald finally, but I am sure that it did with Sir George Cartier. I cannot now remember whether or not Sir John Macdonald stated to me that this had been matter of discussion with the delegates, but Sir George Cartier did state so. Sir George and Sir John were jointly authorized to act for the Government, but Sir John Macdonald became very ill about that time, and I cannot remember whether the discussion took place previously to his illness or not. I am able to state positively with regard to Sir George Cartier, that his answer was that there was no power in the Government to grant the amnesty, that it was an Imperial matter solely, in consequence of the state of the title to the territory at that time. Sir George Cartier did not communicate to me whether or not he had made any representation as to what in his opinion would be the policy of the Imperial Government on the subject. I do not think he informed me that he had made any communication that the good offices of the Government, or any member of the Government, unofficially or otherwise, would be used with the Imperial Government in that direction. I think from statements he made to me afterwards, that he told the delegates that this matter, being of course an Imperial matter, he had no doubt that they would take up the subject in England, and that he was warranted in saying so by the fact of the anxiety which the Imperial Government had shown to bring about a settlement of the difficulties in the North-West Territory. I do not remember that any communication was ever made to me that any promise or statement had been made to the effect that the good offices or in-

fluence, or representations of the Government, or any member of the Government, would be used with the Imperial Government in that direction. Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald had, I believe, repeated conversations, as they informed me, with Archbishop Taché, on the subject of the amnesty before he left for Red River on his mission. At that time the death of Scott had not occurred. It occurred, I think, only the day, or the second day before the Archbishop reached Fort Garry.

The conversations about amnesty, so far as I can recollect—I was not present of course—were only to the effect that the proclamation of 6th December, 1869, would be still held in force. Sir George Cartier did not tell me whether or not he had authorized the Archbishop to make any representation to the people of the territory, or to anybody up there upon the subject of that proclamation, or the promises contained therein. What I understood from Sir George was, that he was inducing Archbishop Taché to undertake the task of going to the North-West, and doing his best to get the people to understand that the dispositions of the Canadian Government and Canadian people towards them were most friendly, and that he stated to him that he should have this proclamation circulated amongst the people on his arrival, and should endeavor to induce them to comply with its terms.

The conversation I had with Sir John Macdonald on this topic were to the same effect. He indicated to me that he had used to the Archbishop expressions in the same sense.

Archbishop Taché came to Ottawa after that repeatedly—once, twice, or three times, I think—and I know they had conversations with him; but the whole thing came always to this point, that he was pressing very hard to have an amnesty given to the people there, because he saw they were troubled, and he thought an amnesty would bring peace to that country; and, on the other hand, my colleagues, as well as myself, would answer him that we could not interfere as a Government as it was an Imperial matter, and so on, in the sense I have before mentioned. This was after he had been in the North-West.

No statement was made that, though the Government as a government could not interfere, what they could do would be done to obtain the favorable consideration of the Imperial Government. What Sir John or Sir George may have stated I cannot say; but I urged upon the Archbishop the propriety and necessity of his preparing the memorial I spoke of just now. I was most pressing with him previous to the meeting of Parliament in October last to do that, in order that his memorial might be transmitted to England by the Governor, with whom I understood from the Archbishop he had had a conversation, and therefore I thought it was important for the success of his endeavors to have that memorial, in which the case, as he wanted to lay it down, might be brought before the notice of the Imperial Government. I am aware of conferences which took place with Father Ritchot at different periods upon this topic. As far as he was concerned these conferences were in the same sense as those which the Archbishop, pressing again and again for the amnesty. I may say that I was present at an interview that he had with the Governor General on the matter, but as I was there in my capacity as a Minister of the Crown, I must respectfully decline to give any information in reference to it.

*Mr. Blake.*—I ask you what took place between Father Ritchot and the Governor General in your presence?

*Mr. Langevin.*—I conceive myself not to be in a position to answer that question, as I was there in the capacity of a Minister, and asked by the Governor to be there in that capacity. In my conversations with Father Ritchot I always tried to impress upon him the necessity of preventing any new difficulty, and of allaying the excitement, because by the people, or a portion of the people, agitating or taking up the question by themselves, I was of opinion that the solution of the difficulty would be still further delayed. I stated to him, as I stated to Archbishop Taché, that the question was one beyond the control of the Canadian Government, but that I was surprised that the people did not sign petitions to the Queen, showing that they were firm in their desires to see the parties implicated in the troubles of 1869-70 pardoned; that I thought these petitions would do more to call the attention of the Imperial authorities to this matter, and bring about a solution of the

difficulty than any other mode which could be employed. Father Ritchot stated, as far as I can recollect now, that representations had already been made on the subject, but that the people were becoming impatient, and that the position of the parties supposed to be implicated in the death of Thomas Scott, had become intolerable; that these parties were constantly in fear of losing their lives, and that therefore the peace of the country required an immediate solution of the question. I represented repeatedly to Father Ritchot the difficulty of joint action of the members of the Government in a matter of this kind, which joint action he wished repeatedly to obtain. I showed him that there was a certain public opinion on this matter in a certain portion or in certain portions of the Dominion, while, on the contrary, the public opinion on the same subject in other portions of the Dominion was totally different; that, therefore, he must see the difficulty of joint action in a matter of that kind, and that time alone would, in my opinion, bring about a solution in the same way as had been the case in connection with the troubles or insurrection of 1837 and 1838, a few years after which a amnesty was obtained on the petition of the Parliament of the Province of Canada, which would have been impossible one or two or three years immediately after those troubles. I told him these North-West difficulties were such as to render joint action impossible at that time, and that it was in consequence of these divergences of public opinion that the Government could not act as a Government at that time. He could not have understood, however, that I meant by that that there would be action on the part of a portion of the Ministry. I expressly explained to him that it was impossible that he could have the good offices of the Government, or any member of the Government, in promoting the amnesty at that time. I consequently told him, as I stated to the Archbishop, that I advised that Riel should not take his seat in Parliament or come to Ottawa, because his coming here and taking his seat would certainly excite the people again. I cannot say what the nature of Sir George Cartier's replies to Father Ritchot were, because he had repeated conversations with him; but I was present at one or two interviews between Sir John Macdonald and Father Ritchot, more to interpret between Sir John and Father Ritchot, the latter not understanding English well, and the purport of those conversations was to the same effect as those I have just now detailed,—that, as a Government, we could not interfere, and that time was a great master in matters of that kind. I cannot remember anything being said in that conversation in reference to the intended visit of any member of the Government being used in a way in which the Government, as a Government, could not interfere. It was in one of these conversations that I advised that Riel should not take his seat after he had been elected for Provencher. I never saw Riel, and never spoke to him. My advice was given to Archbishop Taché and some others of his friends. I do not think I was present when any other of my colleagues discussed that subject with the Archbishop or any of Riel's friends. None of my colleagues intimated to me that they had had any communication with anybody upon this subject beyond what I have stated. I do not know whether any of my colleagues did anything to prevent Riel taking his seat. I know that I did all I could in that direction. I was not aware of any negotiations in reference to Riel leaving the North-West. I never heard of any such negotiations. I have not been in Manitoba at all. I never heard any discussion upon that subject. I never had any communication with the delegates myself at the period of the delegation. I am not aware that the memorial, of which I suggested the preparation, was sent at all. The memorial I spoke of just now as coming from Archbishop Taché was one which it was intended he should prepare last autumn. I am not aware whether he prepared and sent it or not. I had no discussion nor any knowledge derived from my colleagues that they had any discussion with these people or any others as to the action to be taken on the address from the Legislature of Manitoba. I do not remember the date of departure of Archbishop Taché for the North-West from Ottawa or from the Province of Ontario or Quebec. I cannot say whether or not the Government were aware, after Archbishop Taché's leaving Montreal, and before his reaching Fort Garry, that there was a number of people held there as prisoners, and that one of them had been condemned to death. I am disposed to give you all the information I have, but

I cannot carry these dates of five or six years ago in my head. I do not think we knew that Bolton had been condemned to die at the time Archbishop Taché left here, or after he left here, while we had an opportunity of communicating with him before he reached Fort Garry.

(Signed,) HECTOR L. LANGEVIN.

COMMITTEE ROOM,  
THURSDAY, April 16th, 1874.

*By Mr. Geoffrion :—*

I had no knowledge of any memorial or document upon the subject of the death of Scott, nor as to the amnesty signed by Sir George Cartier and handed to the Governor General, and by him transmitted to the Imperial authorities.

(Signed,) HECTOR L. LANGEVIN.

COMMITTEE ROOM,  
17th April, 1874.

The Right Reverend ALBYNANDER TACHÉ, Archbishop of St. Boniface, in the Province of Manitoba, &c., deposed as follows :—

I have some information with regard to the causes which gave rise to the troubles in the North-West. Some of them are more or less remote, and some more directly within my knowledge. Among the more remote causes, I will state the formation, in former days, of a party in the Province of Assiniboia which took the title of the "Canadian" party. This "Canadian" party at first met with the sympathy of the natives of the country, because at one time all the population were desirous of being united with Canada. This party subsequently caused a certain amount of ill-feeling amongst the population from its resistance to the laws. Amongst this party were those who broke into the prisons and subsequently threatened the half-breeds with expulsion from the country. The number of this party was perhaps ten Canadians and a few half-breeds who joined with them. The first jail-breaking was on 20th April, 1863, and the next on 21st April following. The third was in 1857 or 1868. Subsequent to these disturbances, the population began to entertain fears with regard to their union with Canada. This was some four or five years before 1869. It came on gradually. In a few words, this is what I know of the remote cause of the trouble.

This more remote cause was followed by one which was more direct, and this may be said to have commenced with the arrival of the first surveyor who came into the colony of Assiniboia. It was in the autumn of 1868. In the country at that time universal distress prevailed. A surveyor arrived, who stated he was going to carry on works in the name of the Canadian Government, and that the workmen would be paid with Canadian money. The works were commenced, but, to the great surprise of the inhabitants, some action was taken by the surveyor which gave rise to considerable suspicion. In the first instance the price that was paid for their labor gave rise to great discontent. Not only was the remuneration small, but the people were compelled to take out their pay in goods, which goods they were required to buy from a shop to which the laborers were not desirous of resorting. However, distress being universal, the population were compelled to submit to these conditions. In the course of the winter discontent was increased, because it was reported that the surveyor and his employees had entered into treaties with the Indians for the purchase of the lands partly belonging to the half-breeds. In fact, a treaty was concluded with the Indians. Certain lands were surveyed by this employé of the Government. It was even reported that the Indians had been made intoxicated in order that the lands might be the more easily obtained from them. Not only was this statement generally reported, but the surveyor was brought before the courts and was convicted of having sold intoxicating liquors to the Indians contrary to law. Mr. Snow was the name of the surveyor. I have omitted one other circumstance which was incident to what I have already stated, and which contributed in a considerable degree to the discontent. It is, that a person who accompanied Mr. Snow—I do not know in what



capacity—carried on a correspondence with the newspapers of Ontario, in which correspondence he insulted the whole population of the Province, both French and English, especially the half-breeds. Although I do not know in what capacity this person was employed, I know he was an employé of the Government. The discontent caused by the purchase of the lands from the Indians was so great that the population rose against the proceeding and against the people at Point du Chêne. The inhabitants of Point du Chêne went to Mr. Snow, and the person who was with him, and compelled them to leave the locality. Mr. Snow's companion then came to my house to see me, and to ask me to interfere. He also stated that he had requested the half-breeds of Point du Chêne to come with him to me, and that they refused to do so, saying "We know very well that His Lordship will prevail upon us to keep quiet, and yet we are so sure we are right that we will neither refuse his Lordship nor desist from the course which we have taken." Some days later Mr. Snow was convicted by the courts, and some days after this condemnation he entered into negotiations with the half-breeds of Point du Chêne, and went with them to the Governor, Mr. McTavish. After explanations and assurances on his part that he would confine himself to going on with his work, the half-breeds stated to him, "If you content yourself with doing the work ordered by the Government, not only will we not interfere with you any more, but will protect you against any one else who may wish to interfere with you." And so they did, in the ensuing season, when Mr. Snow nearly lost his life in consequence of the discontent of some of his men.

This is, I consider, a short statement of the second cause which led to the difficulties.

The third cause has relation to the action of the Canadian Government itself. When news was received that negotiations had taken place between the Canadian Government and the authorities in England on the subject of the acquisition of the Territory, without any attempt at consulting the population of the Province, who considered themselves civilized and who were civilized, great discontent arose not only because they were not consulted, but because they were not even mentioned in the negotiations. So far as I could ascertain this discontent was universal; and further I am of opinion that some of those who afterwards took a different position were those who were at first the most discontented. The discontent increased when, on the return to Ottawa of the delegates to England from the Canadian Government, it was understood that an Act had been passed by the three branches of the Canadian Legislature for the Provisional Government of the Territory. So great was the discontent that it at this period manifested itself at several points, that I considered it right to leave the territory and come to Canada to inform the authorities of the position of affairs and the discontent which existed. I endeavoured to cause it to be understood that serious trouble would arise, but I did not succeed. I received, here in Canada, about the commencement of the month of October, 1869, a letter from the Governor of the Territory, Mr. McTavish, in which he stated to me the increase which was going on in the discontent, and also enumerated the causes which gave rise to it. That letter was communicated to the Canadian Government. It is private in part, but the rest of it I am willing to lay before the Committee. I may observe that I did not communicate the letter officially to the Government. I showed it to one member of the Government, and a copy was sent to another member of the Government. I showed it myself to the Honorable Mr. Langevin; and the Honorable Sir George Cartier having met me in such a way that I could no longer speak to him on the subject, a mutual friend took him a copy of the letter, which is as follows:—

(No. 1.)

"FORT GARRY, 4th September, 1869.

"MY LORD.—I notice your success in Lower Canada (Province of Quebec I believe I should call it) in collecting for the Relief Committee here, but I believe my respected countryman, the Honorable John S. Macdonald, has been too tough a subject. No account yet of the \$5,000 voted by the Ontario Government. The honorable gentleman has not answered my letter at all, and I am told that some of the Upper Canadian papers advocate the retention of the grant, as they say it is not required by the R. R.

"settlers. I can tell them I think otherwise, as how to satisfy the claims against the Relief Committee has been a subject of some anxiety to me.

"I have had a more than ordinarily busy summer, with rather above the average of *contretemps* in the way of business. Besides this, you no doubt have heard that there has been, and is still, a good deal of agitation here. Unfortunately every Canadian official as he comes in falls into Dr. Schultz's hands, and evidently continues in good accord with him. Our friends, the Canadian half-breeds, shrewdly suspect that no good can come to them from such an alliance, and are in consequence rapidly becoming more decidedly opposed to Canada. If the Honorable Wm. McDougall, when he comes here, shows the same leaning, there will be trouble here; and in any case in the interest of your people, I will take the liberty to say that I think it would be of the utmost importance to them, as well as to all concerned, that you should be here when the new order of things is instituted.

"Your other duties may render this impossible, but, if so, it is much to be regretted, as taken in time you could control matters which afterwards it would not be so easy to manage. We had, as you well know, our times of excitement, but I have never seen the people here in the restless excited state they are now. None of them I have spoken with can give a clear account of what they wish, but very clearly show that they are suspicious that no good to them is intended. I have done my utmost to point out to them that it must be to the interest of Mr. McDougall or any other who may come as Governor, that his Government should be successful, and that success could not be obtained by injustice to a large section of the governed; that the apparent connexion between Schultz and the officials who have come, simply arose from the Doctor having been kind and accommodating, that in the performance of their duties that sort of thing would not have any effect on them, but I find it useless, their suspicions remain.

"Colonel Dennis, who has come in as surveyor, met Schultz on the way from St. Paul, or rather was overtaken by him. The Doctor offered the Colonel a seat in his waggon which Colonel Dennis anxious to escape from a heavily laden party, gladly accepted. Of course on arriving here the Doctor took him to his house, where he remained till his party arrived. In the mean time our friends at Oak Point sent Colonel Dennis a letter warning him not to come out here with Schultz, Hallet or Hall, as if he did they would turn him back. I believe Augustin Nolin was the author of the letter, mindful of the claim-taking and land-buying of last spring, thought it necessary. However, Colonel Dennis did not go, but some days ago his party went out with their horses, which were poor, and it is said, to employ their time, commenced marking out claims for themselves, on which the half-breeds ordered them off and they came in post haste. I was told to-day that a Major Wallace, who was in charge of the party which went out to Oak Point, has gone on to meet Mr. McDougall, who it is expected will be here on the 15th October; but I cannot say that it is positively the case Major Wallace has gone, much less, if he has, that his trip is connected with the check at Oak Point."

\* \* \* \* \*

(Signed), W. McTAVISH.

"To the Lord Bishop of St. Boniface,  
"Boucherville, Montreal, Canada."

I arrived in Canada in the middle of July. I do not remember the day exactly. I came at once to Ottawa, where I had the honor to meet Sir George Cartier. I then communicated to him the general apprehensions which I felt, and he said he knew it all a great deal better than I did, and did not want any information. I subsequently went to Quebec in the course of the month of September. I was at the Lieutenant Governor's at Quebec, in company with the Archbishop of Quebec. His Honour asked me some questions as to the position of the country. I gave the answers which my knowledge of the facts prompted me to give. His Honour said to me: "It is absolutely necessary the Government should be acquainted with these circumstances." I told him, that certainly was my opinion also, and that it was even the object of my journey, but that I had not succeeded in causing my fears or my ideas to be entertained. Then His Honour, the

Lieutenant Governor, said to me "Sir George Cartier is here in the house; it is absolutely necessary you should tell him this." He then sent for Sir George Cartier, and before him the Lieutenant Governor put to me the same questions he had put to me before. I gave the same reply I had given him, and I received the same answer from Sir George that I had received at Ottawa. At a subsequent period, I am not sure whether in the last days of September or the first days of October, I received the letter from Mr. McTavish, the Governor, which I have produced, and certain other private letters which I have not in my possession. I considered, in view of the facts, that it was my duty, in spite of the unpleasant reception with which I had met, to make further efforts to communicate the facts. As I was unable to address myself to Sir George Cartier, and knew no other member of the Government except Mr. Langevin and Mr. Chapais, whom I was unable to see, I made a journey to Quebec, where Mr. Langevin then was, with the hope that I might succeed better than with Sir George Cartier. Then it was that I showed my letter to Mr. Langevin in the beginning of October. This was the first time that I spoke to Mr. Langevin on any important matter. Mr. Langevin asked me if I could not return to Red River, I told him I was obliged to go to Rome to attend the Oecumenical Council, and further that as they had not thought proper to give me any answer with which to satisfy the people of Red River, I did not see that my presence at Red River would be productive of any good. Then Mr. Langevin asked me whether I would consent to return from Rome if it was found my services would be of advantage at Red River, and if the Government requested me to do so; I told him that I would. I then went to see Mr. Chauveau and Mr. Ouimet, with both of whom I was acquainted, I communicated to them the information of which I was possessed and begged of them, looking to the positions which they occupied, to impress upon the Government the necessity of taking some steps. At Montreal (I do not remember whether just before I started on this journey to Quebec, or immediately after I returned) I was in company with several friends to whom I was speaking of the dangers with which I considered the Red River country was threatened, and to whom I communicated also the letter of which I have spoken from Mr. McTavish, the Governor of the country. One of my friends then said "It is absolutely necessary that the Government should know all these things." I said "Yes, it is certainly so, but I cannot do more than I have done. If you have any other method which will be more successful in conveying this information to them, I am quite willing to adopt it." One of these gentlemen then requested permission from me to copy that letter, with the view of sending it to Sir George Cartier at Ottawa. I gave it to him, and he copied it, and two days afterwards told me he had received a reply from Sir George, and that the reply was "we know all about it and we have made provision respecting matters," and the next day the Ottawa papers announced that a certain number of rifles and a certain quantity of ammunition would be sent to Fort Garry with Mr. McDougall. The information I conveyed to Mr. Langevin and to Sir George Cartier was substantially what I have before conveyed to this Committee, and I expressed to these gentlemen my fear and apprehension that some trouble would arise in the country from the indicated causes and the discontent which had grown out of them. All this time, as a matter of course, the difficulties went on increasing at Red River, for the reason that the so-called Canadian party, of which I have spoken (as they thought the time was approaching when they should be pre-eminent), became more and more insulting. That party had in the meantime largely increased, gradually up to the time of my departure, and as I have since learned, rapidly during the summer of 1869. At the time of the jail-breaking in the spring of 1868, the number of the party would be not more than twenty or twenty-five to the best of my knowledge, apart from the few half-breeds who had identified themselves with them.

They did not hesitate to say that the half-breeds would soon be driven from the country, or kept as cart-drivers to bring in the vehicles of the new emigrants. About this time it was that the surveyors were stopped; and it was said, but I cannot state from my own observation, that they were stopped because they were surveying lands already occupied. As soon as the news was received that Hon. Mr. McDougall, with

arms and ammunition, was on his way, it is needless to say the excitement became still greater, and this the more so because there was a certain number of young Canadians there who stated (falsely, it is true, but still stated) that they were already enrolled, and would on the arrival of Mr. McDougall, take up arms and drive out the half-breeds. It was thought in the colony that all these young Canadians were cadets at the military school. Some of them even had their uniforms in their portmanteaus, and on one occasion it was reported that they were to appear at a meeting in their uniforms and commence a species of war against the half-breeds. I cannot say if it was a public meeting. I was not in the country at the time. I believe it was a public meeting. It was held in the month of October. Nearly all these young persons were employed by the surveyors. At this time, not only was Mr. Snow in the country, but there was a large number of other surveyors. A report was then circulated in the country, and subsequently proved to be true, that the surveyors had instructions to lay out for immediate settlement the best lands at Point du Chêne, and on the Red River and Stinking River. All these lands were known as the property of the half-breeds. It was then that the outbreaks commenced, and the half-breeds took up arms. This is a distinct history of the causes. I do not agree with Mr. Langevin in the expression he made use of in his evidence that the long rule of the Hudson's Bay Company had to do with the trouble. In proof of my view, I would adduce the following facts:—Some months before the commencement of the troubles, a petition was prepared by the so-called Canadian party subsequent to the case of jail-breaking, which was perpetrated in order to liberate Mr. Schultz. This petition was followed by another petition. The last petition was signed by, I think, some 800 of the most respectable people in the colony, both French and English. I cannot state whether they were all old residents, or whether some of them were Canadians who had just arrived, but it can be ascertained, because the petition has been published.

In the address which was sent in at that time, the population stated they had confidence in and respect for the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company. The difficulties which arose from this jail-breaking and these petitions were causes of the trouble which followed, because the people said: "This is the kind of men who will be sent to rule over the country." The reason why there had been a wish to have a change in the form of government was the natural desire of having a government in which the people could take part. I must say further that at one time there was a certain amount of feeling against the Hudson's Bay Company, previous to and up to 1859 and 1860, growing out of the monopoly by the Company of the fur trade, and the unsatisfactory representation of the population in the Council of Assiniboia. But subsequently the number of the Council being increased, and the new councillors being chosen from amongst representative men in the population, the discontent naturally diminished. I may say, further, that the monopoly ceased in 1849 in the colony, though not throughout the North-West, but it gradually ceased throughout that territory, and had entirely ceased several years prior to the transfer to Canada of the territory. Immediately before the troubles, the Hudson's Bay Company was not unpopular. During the troubles, however, the Company became unpopular among the French half-breeds. This unpopularity was caused by the negotiations which took place between the Honorable Company and the Canadian Government. The population complained that the Company had sold them, and that the Government had bought them. I do not think there was any discontent among the officers of the Company with regard to these negotiations with the Government. They were very well satisfied because these negotiations were favorable to them. There was a feeling amongst the factors that they ought to have shared in the £300,000 paid to the Company by the Government; but this did not irritate the factors against the Government. The irritation that existed was merely against those who controlled the Company in England. The proof of this is that all the officers of the Company were opposed to any resistance to Canada, although they were well aware that the population certainly had some grounds for complaint and dissatisfaction.

There was one transaction with the Hudson's Bay Company which interested the Company only. That was when the Company changed shareholders. In this case there

was a great deal of dissatisfaction among the factors. It had nothing, however, to do with political affairs. I do not know whether there was a sufficient number of the so-called Canadian party in the vicinity of the Fort to have defended it, had they been called on, and had they responded to such call. The only persons who I conceive would be called on by the Company in the emergency were the old pensioners, twenty or thirty in number, of whom many were aged and invalids, and who were scattered through the country and not concentrated near the fort. My notion is this, that for many years previous to this time the Canadian party had shown themselves hostile to the Company; had insulted the Government, and had so conducted themselves as to render it almost impossible for the Government to rely on them or to call on them for assistance. As to the French half-breeds, they were the party on whom the Government had for several years past relied for assistance in difficulties. They were at this time the attacking parties, and of course could not be used by the Company. The Government believed that they intended nothing against the Queen's authority, and therefore had no idea that they intended attacking the fort, and was taken by surprise at the taking of the fort. I think that the old resident Scotch and English half-breeds would not have answered the call of the Company.

The shop to which the men were compelled to resort was kept by a man named Hall. The common report of the people was that it belonged to Dr. Schultz, and this was why the people of Point du Chêne said to Colonel Dennis, "If you come here with Schultz, Hall or Hallett, we will send you back." This Hallett was interpreter to Snow, when he made a treaty with the Indians, and was one of the ring leaders in the last prison-breaking. He was also selected as the guide to take Hon. Mr. McDougall into the country. It was said that the work of surveying was instituted by the Government with the view of relieving the general distress existing. But the people placed no reliance on this statement, because the provisions of the Canadian Government were sold at a higher rate than similar provisions were sold in other shops in the country. For instance, flour, one of the most indispensable articles, was sold in other shops for \$15, and in the Government shop for \$18; and further, the men who worked in the woods were paid only \$15 per month, and they had to carry away the trees and wood which they had cut down, on their shoulders. I was a member of the Relief Committee at the time of the distress, and we received news from the Province of Ontario that \$5,000 had been voted for the relief of the distressed. The Committee went into debt on the strength of this promise to buy provisions for the suffering. We were never paid that money. In Mr. McTavish's letter, which I submitted to the Committee a few moments ago, there is a passage relating to this subject. I presume that this debt is now due by the Relief Committee to the Hudson's Bay Company. I cannot say that the facts relating to the sale of the Government stores at a higher rate than those sold in retail shops, were officially represented to the Government, but they were stated in public prints. I do not think I said anything about it myself to Sir George or Mr. Langevin, because it seemed to be a very small matter, compared with the difficulties from which the country was suffering. The persons who retailed the Government provisions were Mr. Snow and Mr. Mair, the person of whom I formerly spoke when I said I did not know exactly what position he occupied. I simply knew he was employed by Mr. Snow. I am not aware that the facts as to the sale of the provisions were communicated to the Government in any other way than through the newspapers. The points I communicated to Mr. Langevin and Sir George Cartier, were as to the discontent that existed among the people, because they had not had communicated to them the conditions on which they were to come into the Confederation.

There was a certain degree of apprehension which existed as to the person to be appointed Governor, whom the people did not know, and who could not therefore be regarded with confidence by them. I took the liberty of making suggestions to the Government, recommending them to send to the North-West two Commissioners, one French and one English, who should mix with the people, ascertain their feelings, and be able to report to the Government what steps it would be able to take which would be

satisfactory to the people. I made no further statement as to what I thought should be the details of Government, save that I expressed my view that it would be good to allow the people to elect some members of the Council. As to the Governor, I suggested that it would be proper to select a man who had lived amongst and was known to the people, and being asked my opinion, I recommended Mr. McTavish, who, in response to an enquiry from me, had made objection to taking the office on account of his health, and who, as I thought, told the Government, would take the office if pressed. I remember now, that when the Hon. Mr. McDougall was starting for the North-West with his ready-made Government, notwithstanding the manner in which my remarks had already been received, I wrote to Sir George that such a course should not be attempted, but the formation of the Council should be delayed until the arrival of the Governor, and that the members should then be chosen from the people of the territory. I did not write officially upon this subject, but I wrote a private letter to Sir George Cartier, to which I had not the honor of receiving any reply. This letter was written from Montreal in the month of October. Mr. Langevin replied to a communication I made to him in a very respectful manner, stating that he did not see what could be done under the circumstances, and trusting that my fears would prove to have been exaggerated. The apprehension which I entertained, and which I expressed to Sir George Cartier and the other gentlemen, was that if the Canadian Government was established in the country, some excess might be committed by the so-called Canadian party, which would lead to a rising among the population. I mean that I was of opinion that this might lead to some disturbance, but I had no apprehension of a general uprising. I could not define absolutely the position of affairs, of course, because I did not know of what disposition they all were. I was of opinion that circumstances would exercise a very considerable influence on the whole matter. If circumstances were favorable to the people, there would, in all probability, be no trouble. If, on the other hand, they were unfavorable, there might be trouble. I stated this to Mr. Langevin, verbally, but did not communicate it to him in writing. I mentioned this to Mr. Langevin and Sir George Cartier, and also to Mr. Chauveau, Mr. Ouiset, and other friends, who, I considered, would have influence with the two members of the Government I have just named. I left for Rome about the middle of October. I have been asked if I had any definite apprehension of what was going to occur in the North-West. I had no definite apprehension. I was not aware that there was any plan of action, and my opinion is that there was none. I have kept myself entirely out of all those machinations, if machinations they were; and, moreover, my opinion is that there were none. The matter grew up gradually, and the result was never foreseen or calculated upon by any body in my opinion.

I am of opinion that the articles published in the newspapers gave rise to a great deal of the feeling regarding Governor McDougall, and I may say that I consider the newspapers were, to some extent, the cause of the disturbances: not the Canadian newspapers alone, but especially a paper called the *North-Westerner*, which was published for some time before the troubles in the Colony of Assiniboia, and which contained attacks, first against the Company, and afterwards against the half-breeds, especially the French half-breeds.

I had a conversation with Governor McTavish on the subject of what passed between him and the Canadian Government, when he was at Ottawa. I had a conversation with him on the subject of my journey to Canada, and during that conversation, he told me what passed between him and the Canadian Government. Mr. McTavish was the only person to whom I communicated the reason of my journey to Canada. He said to me then: "My Lord, I wish that you may be successful, but I greatly fear you will lose your time and your trouble. I have just returned from Ottawa, and although I have been for forty years in the country, and Governor for fifteen years, I have not been able to cause any of my recommendations to be accepted by the Government." He continued: "Those gentlemen are of opinion that they know a great deal more about this country than we do," and added: "However, whether you succeed or not you will have done a conscientious work, and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done your duty."

The only reason for delaying the granting of the amnesty promised by the proclamation of Sir John Young, that I am aware of, has been the excitement existing throughout the Dominion, and especially in the Provinces of Ontario. This is not merely my own opinion; it is also the opinion expressed to me by certain members of the late Government. The constant reply which I received when I spoke to them on the subject was, that the excitement was so great that the Government would not be sustained if the amnesty was given. I spoke first of all to Sir George Cartier on the subject, I then spoke to Sir John A. Macdonald, and subsequently to Mr. Langevin. I also spoke on subject to other members of the Government, but not so minutely because I was not brought so closely in contact with them. The reply I have quoted was that given me by each member of the Government when I spoke to them.

In the conversations I had with these gentlemen, I always understood that the amnesty was to be a full, complete and entire one. I never had any conversation on the subject of a partial amnesty, under that proclamation. I have had a communication relative to a partial amnesty, but that was not until the year 1873. That communication was with Sir John A. Macdonald, and it was made verbally, not in writing. I left for Rome in the month of October. On the evening before I left Paris, I saw a telegram stating that troubles had broken out at Red River. This was the first news I heard on the subject. I started, however, next morning and proceeded to Rome. On my arrival there other telegrams confirmed the news I had heard in Paris, and some days after I received letters which in effect stated that Mr. McDougall had been met at the frontier and had been repulsed. The next week I had further news telling me of the progress that had been made in the movement. I may state here that the last communication I then received from the Red River was dated the 16th November, 1869, and I received no communication afterwards until my arrival in Pembina in the month of March of the following year. On Christmas day His Grace the Archbishop of Halifax came to me with a letter from Sir Edward Kenny, and in this letter His Grace was told that troubles had broken out at Red River. Regret was expressed at my absence, and also a desire that I should endeavor to return thither. I replied to His Grace that the thing was impossible in consequence of the reception I had met with in passing through Ottawa. I desire here to state that this did not refer to the manner in which I was personally received, but I meant that I did not see that I could do any good seeing that I was not likely to receive any means of pacifying the people. Two days subsequently, His Lordship, Bishop Langevin, of Rimouski, came to me with a letter from his brother, the Hon. Mr. Langevin, alluding to the difficulties at the Red River, and expressing a desire that I should return. I do not say that this desire was expressed in the letter, but simply that Bishop Langevin had this letter in his hand, and said it was a very great pity that I could not go back. I then said to him: "Your brother knows how it is I cannot return." He then said to me "Would you consent to return?"—"Yes," I said, "I am willing to return if the Government ask me to do so, and give me some means of settling the difficulty." He then asked my leave to telegraph to his brother to this effect, and I consented to his doing so. On the 8th of January he came to me with a telegram which he had received from his brother, as follows:—

(No. 2.)

*No. 2,305—Telegramma—Parole 46.*

"Presentato a Valentia li 1870, Ore 3. Arrivato a Roma li 8/18.—Ore 9 10.

"BISHOP JEAN LANGEVIN.

"Thirteen Via Agonale, near Place Navone, Rome.

"Pontifical States.

(No. 2.)

"Tell Bishop Taché, Government of Canada gladly accept his patriotic offer to go to Fort Garry and request his immediate return; his expenses will of course be paid.

"Answer.

(Signed.)

"HECTOR L. LANGEVIN,

"Ottawa, Seventh."

I then took the liberty of remarking to Bishop Langevin that I did not offer to do so, but that what I said was, I would go if the Government asked me. The difficulties were so serious that I did not think on merely personal grounds, I could decline to go. I therefore said to Bishop Langevin that I would consult before giving a reply, and would myself prepare an answer to his telegram. He consented to this, and I prepared an answer to that telegram, as follows :

(No. 3.)

"Rome, January 11th, 1870.

"HON. H. L. LANGEVIN, C.B.,  
"Minister Public Works, Ottawa, Canada.

"At request of Government of Canada, Bishop Taché leaves this week if possible.

"BISHOP LANGEVIN."

As a matter of course, certain formalities had to be gone through before I could leave Rome, and in these formalities some days were occupied. I considered I ought to consult the Archbishop of Quebec, because at that time my diocese was in the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec. The Archbishop of Quebec, Baillargeon, said to me : "From the manner in which you were treated I can understand how it is you could not go, but if you can consent to set aside the affront you have received, there is no doubt you would be doing a good work in proceeding to Red River." I applied for the necessary permission, and left Rome on the 13th January. I had business at Marseilles, Lyons, Paris and London. I stayed at all these places, travelling by night, and arrived at Portland on February 2nd, where I found a letter for me from Sir George E. Cartier as follows :

(No. 4.)

"Ottawa, 25th January, 1870.

*(Translation.)*

"MY LORD,—The few lines which I now address your Lordship will meet you on your arrival at Portland. I must at once express to your Lordship the gratitude which my colleagues as well as myself feel for the readiness with which you have so graciously and patriotically offered your invaluable services to assist the Government of Canada in quieting the troubles which exist at Red River, and for the promptitude with which you have returned to this side of the Atlantic to meet the views of the Government.

"We all trust that the voyage has not been a very distressing one. I need not say that we look with great anxiety for your arrival at Ottawa, immediately after you land at Portland. We therefore beg your Lordship to be so good as to set out, immediately after your reaching land, direct for the Capital. We shall be extremely obliged if, when you arrive at Portland, you will have the kindness to telegraph me the day when you will probably be in Ottawa. As a matter of course, immediately upon your arrival here, your Lordship will be informed of all that has occurred at Red River, and how matters stand there.

"Awaiting the pleasure and honor of again seeing you at Ottawa, allow me to subscribe myself,

"Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

(Signed,)

"GEO. E. CARTIER.

"To His Lordship,

"Bishop Taché."

I was unwell after my arrival. My indisposition was caused by my journey, and I could not start for some days after. I arrived at Ottawa on the 9th February, in company with Sir George Cartier. During my stay at Ottawa I had several opportunities of meeting His Excellency, Sir John Young, and several of the Ministers. On my arrival in Ottawa, Sir George Cartier introduced me to the Privy Council, the Council being in Session. Some members of the Council, I do not remember who now suggested that all the papers connected with the troubles in the Red River Settlement should be submitted to me for my information, and they were so submitted. The day after my arrival I went with Sir George Cartier to His Excellency the Governor General. During the remainder



of my stay in Ottawa, I met several of those gentlemen on different occasions, but there were only three of them with whom I spoke particularly on the subject of the affairs in the North-West. Those three gentlemen were Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir George Cartier and Hon. Mr. Howe. In all these conversations a desire was expressed that I should proceed to Red River, in order to bring about a pacification of the people. I alluded to the consequences which might result to some of those who were implicated in these troubles, and I was invariably told in all these conversations that the past would be forgotten, and that if the people would only consent to enter into the Confederation they should not be troubled in any way on account of the past. It was after these assurances had been received that certain documents, which have been published, were placed in my hands. I have the originals, and produce the letter of Mr. Howe, dated February 16th. (See page 111 of Blue Book Correspondence relative to disturbances in Red River Settlement.)

To this letter was attached the proclamation of Sir John Young, of 6th December, 1869, and I was assured this proclamation should have all the force the day I arrived at Red River that it had the day it was given to me. I may state one thing which seemed somewhat extraordinary. Mr. Howe asked me, before I received the letter of 16th February from him, if I would not prepare the draft of the letter, and which he said he would sign. I said no, I did not consider it necessary. I thought from what had been said to me, that I understood the position of affairs. I received the assurance I have repeated, as to the proclamation from Hon. Mr. Howe, from Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier. On the same day His Excellency wrote me the letter, dated 16th February. At the same time I received from Hon. Mr. Howe amongst others, the documents I now produce which are two letters from Mr. Howe to the very Rev. Vicar General Thibault, one dated December 4th, 1869 and the other December 6th, 1869. The one dated December 6th is not in the Blue Book, and is as follows:

(No. 5.)

*Letter from Hon. Joseph Howe to Reverend Mr. Thibault, V.G.*

“OFFICE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PROVINCES,

“December 6th, 1869.

“To the Very Rev. Mr. THIBAUT,

“Grand Vicar, Ottawa.

“SIR,—Herewith you will receive 500 copies of a proclamation, signed by the Queen’s representative, for distribution in the North West; and 100 copies of the instructions given to the Hon. William McDougall on the 28th of September. Of these you can make any use which may appear to you judicious. You will be good enough to wait upon Mr. McDougall at Pembina, and show him your instructions, and leave with him any copies of the printed papers which he may require.

“You will please report to this office, through safe channels, as soon as you have anything important to communicate, but will not distribute the proclamations until you get to Pembina, and after consultation with Mr. McDougall.

“An accountable warrant for \$1,000 will be handed to you by Mr. Under-Secretary Meredith, and a similar sum will be paid to Colonel de Salaberry. Should funds be required for any special purpose, Mr. McDougall has authority to draw, or any of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s officers will accept your order.

“I have, &c.

(Signed.)

“JOSEPH HOWE,

“Secretary of State for the Provinces.”

After receiving these instructions, I set out. The verbal instructions I received were always the same. They were, that I was to do all I could to quiet public excitement, and assure the people they would be well treated by Canada. I was always assured that an amnesty would be granted, and that the Government would be only too glad to grant one

if the people would submit. We spoke often and freely of the state of affairs in the country, so far as the news had arrived from Red River. There was something said at the time conveying, however, to me only an indefinite idea as to the formation of a Provisional Government. It was known all the time that possession had been taken of Fort Garry. The three members of the Government with whom I conversed were aware that Fort Garry had been taken possession of. Mention was made of it in some of the documents communicated to me. The leaders of the uprising were all mentioned by name, in both documents and conversation, as I think. Riel was mentioned as President. O'Donoghue, Bruce and Lepine were also mentioned. It was an understood and known fact that Riel was President at that time. It was stated, besides, that subsequently to Governor McDougall's proclamation, and the issue of the commission sending Colonel Dennis, there had been action taken amongst the English population; further, that prisoners had been made by Riel and his party, and that those prisoners were in jail at Fort Garry. The movement amongst the English population was spoken of as being a most foolish thing. The information received was that Colonel Dennis had entered into the country, and had taken possession of what was commonly known as Stone Fort, or Lower Fort Garry; that the population, as a whole, refused to respond to his appeal; and that His Lordship the Bishop of Rupert's Land wrote to Colonel Dennis to dissuade him from proceeding with his undertaking. The so-called Canadian party, and the Indians about Lower Fort Garry, were almost the only ones reported to have taken up arms.

I was not furnished with any other copy of the proclamation than that attached to Mr. Howe's letter of February 16th, but five hundred copies had been sent to Pembina. I was told that these copies were sent to Pembina, and allusions were made in the letter to Mr. Thibault to that effect. I am of opinion the copy was given to me because they were aware it was not yet proclaimed in the country. It had not been published in consequence of the letter of Mr. Howe to Mr. Thibault. I refer to the restriction as to the consultation with Mr. McDougall. I think it was known at Ottawa that the proclamation was not issued, but I cannot assert it positively. I received no other instructions except to make known His Excellency's intentions, as contained in the proclamation. The subject of fresh acts of violence was discussed between ministers and myself every day, and fears were expressed that the country would be filled with "fire and bloodshed." Further than this, surprise was expressed by members of the Privy Council that such a state of affairs had not already supervened, and this was spoken of as a proof of the great moderation which the half-breeds displayed.

There was some conversation between ministers and myself regarding the course taken by Mr. McDougall and Colonel Dennis, and their conduct was severely criticised by them. It was said that the population of the Province had good reason to fear the action of the Canadian authorities, since the persons employed by them had acted in so unwise and ill-advised a manner. I understood from the tenor of the conversation that the amnesty would apply to acts committed after that date (I mean the date of the conversation) as well as before; in fact that it should apply to all acts up to the time of my arrival, provided that the people should consent to unite with Canada. One of the ministers, Sir George Cartier, said to me:—"The Government has made many mistakes, and we cannot be surprised that the population should make some mistakes upon their side. Assure them that the disposition of the Government towards them is such that they may rely upon us with perfect security."

Any other conversation, I had was with Sir John Macdonald, who again impressed me with the necessity of informing the people of the good intentions of the Government towards them. I said to him then, "This is all very well, but there have been acts committed which are blameworthy, and there may be some others before my arrival there. May I promise them an amnesty." He answered me:—"Yes, you may promise it to them." I subsequently asked him to give me in writing the substance of the conversation that had passed between us. This was before I left Ottawa. It was then that Sir John Macdonald wrote me the letter dated the 16th February, 1870, as follows:—

“(Private.)

(No. 6.)

“DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,

“OTTAWA, CANADA, February 16th, 1870.

“MY DEAR LORD,—Before you leave Ottawa on your mission of peace, I think it well  
“to reduce to writing the substance of the conversation I had the honor to have with you  
“this morning.

“I mark this letter ‘private’ in order that it may not be made a public document, to  
“be called for by Parliament prematurely; but you are quite at liberty to use it in such a  
“manner as you may think most advantageous.

“I hope that ere you arrive at Fort Garry, the insurgents, after the explanations that  
“have been entered into by Messrs. Thibault, De Salaberry and Smith, will have laid down  
“their arms, and allowed Governor McTavish to resume the administration of public affairs.  
“In such case, by the Act of the Imperial Parliament of last session, all the public func-  
“tionaries will still remain in power, and the Council of Assinibois will be restored to their  
“former position.

“Will you be kind enough to make full explanation to the Council on behalf of the  
“Canadian Government, as to the feelings which animate, not only the Governor General,  
“but the whole Government, with respect to the mode of dealing with the North-West.  
“We have fully explained to you, and desire you to assure the Council authoritatively,  
“that it is the intention of Canada to grant to the people of the North-West the same free  
“institutions which they themselves enjoy.

“Had not these unfortunate events occurred, the Canadian Government had hoped,  
“long ere this, to have received a report from the Council, through Mr. McDougall, as to  
“the best means of speedily organizing the Government with representative institutions.

“I hope that they will be able immediately to take up that subject, and to consider  
“and report, without delay, on the general policy that should immediately be adopted.

“It is obvious that the most inexpensive mode for the administration of affairs should  
“at first be adopted. As the preliminary expense of organizing the Government after union  
“with Canada, must, in the first, be defrayed from the Canadian treasury, there will be a  
“natural objection in the Canadian Parliament to a large expenditure.

“As it would be unwise to subject the Government of the Territory to a recurrence  
“of the humiliation already suffered by Governor McTavish, you can inform him that if  
“he organizes a local police, of twenty-five men or more, if absolutely necessary, that the  
“expense will be defrayed by the Canadian Government.

“You will be good enough to endeavor to find out Monkman, the person to whom,  
“through Colonel Dennis, Mr. McDougall gave instructions to communicate with the  
“Saulteaux Indians. He should be asked to surrender his letter, and informed that he ought  
“not to proceed upon it. The Canadian Government will see that he is compensated for  
“any expense that he has already incurred.

“In case a delegation is appointed to proceed to Ottawa, you can assure them that they  
“will be kindly received, and their suggestions fully considered. Their expenses coming  
“here and returning, and whilst staying in Ottawa, will be defrayed by us.

“You are authorized to state that the two years during which the present tariff shall  
“remain undisturbed, will commence from the 1st January, 1871, instead of last January  
“as first proposed.

“Should the question arise as to the consumption of any stores or goods belonging to  
“the Hudson’s Bay Company by the insurgents, you are authorized to inform the leaders  
“that if the Company’s Government is restored, not only will there be a general amnesty  
“granted; but in case the Company should claim the payment for such stores, that the  
“Canadian Government will stand between the insurgents and all harm.

“Wishing you a prosperous journey and happy results,

“I beg to remain, with great respect,

“To the Right Reverend

“Your very faithful servant,

“The Bishop of St. Boniface,

(Signed,) “JOHN A. MACDONALD.

“Fort Garry.”

I made no special reference to the possibility of blood being spilt, as the conversation was in general terms. I made use, myself, of the expression before quoted "fire and bloodshed," but I had no knowledge at that time that blood had been spilt. As a matter of fact no blood had been spilt up to that time. This was the 16th of February. I remarked afterwards, that in the letter of Sir John A. Macdonald, there was a condition attached to the amnesty. This condition was not expressed in conversation, and no circumstances were mentioned, and no conditions were specified upon which I was not to issue the proclamation upon my arrival. Although it was known that bloodshed was expected, yet it was not stated that the proclamation was not to be used when I arrived. When I left Ottawa it was my impression and conviction that, no matter what took place in the North-West before my arrival, I was authorized to make that proclamation known as soon as I got there. I received no instructions to communicate with Mr. McDougall. The whole course of action was left to my discretion and judgment, according to the circumstances as I should find them on my arrival.

I was not instructed as to any mode of publishing the proclamation, except that I was to communicate it to the leaders, they being the persons I have already named. I was also directed to communicate with Mr. Smith, who was already a Commissioner, and with Mr. Thibault and Mr. DeSalaberry, and with Governor McTavish. I understood that my instructions as to the amnesty authorized me to cover every event which should have occurred before my arrival in the Territory, including such an event as the death of Scott, and this was my belief and understanding also after I arrived and when I heard of that event.

COMMITTEE ROOM,

SATURDAY, 18th April, 1874.

Archbishop Taché's evidence resumed :

When I reached St. Paul I received intelligence of the convention at Fort Garry, and I telegraphed to Ottawa to Mr. Howe, asking if they had heard of the Bill of Rights.

He replied by telegram, dated 23rd February, 1870, as follows :—

(No. 7.)

*From Ottawa.*

" 23rd February, 1870.

" To Right Rev. Bishop Taché.

" Bill of Rights not yet received here. Will telegraph and write you when I get it.

" What news have you. Answer by telegraph.

(Signed,)

" JOSEPH HOWE."

I then telegraphed the Bill of Rights to Mr. Howe. I received in reply the telegram of 25th February, 1870, as follows :—

(No. 8.)

*By Telegram from Ottawa.*

" To Bishop Taché,

" St. Paul.

" February 25th, 1870.

" Proposition in the main satisfactory, but let the delegation come here to settle the details.

(Signed,)

" JOSEPH HOWE."

I received this after my arrival in Fort Garry. I arrived on the 9th March. I began at once the work of my mission. On my arrival I was able of course to see all the people about my house and neighbourhood, but no body was allowed to come to my house. There was a guard at the door of my house which prevented any one coming in except my clergy. Still I was allowed to go out freely myself, and I did so. I wrote to Mr. Howe to give an account of the feeling which I ascertained existed on my arrival, and as I have a copy of the letter here I produce it, as follows :—