

“One of the causes of dissatisfaction amongst the Hudson Bay Company’s officials in the North West is this: they say that the £300,000 to be paid the Company by the Canadian Government, will be pocketed by the English shareholders, and that not one copper of it will ever be seen by the traders in this country. No doubt they are perfectly right in this view; when the English shareholders get hold of the money they will very likely hold on to it. But the traders of the Nor’West proposed a game a little while ago which, if carried out, would more than make up to them the share of the £300,000 which, they say, the English shareholders intend robbing them of. At a meeting of the Council of Rupert’s Land—the body which controls the Company’s affairs in the territory, a motion was submitted by one of the Chief Factors, proposing that they should secrete for their special use and benefit, furs to the value of £10,000 to be divided amongst the factors and those interested, just as soon as it should be clearly shown that the English shareholders intended gobbling up the whole of the Canadian purchase money. A lengthy and animated discussion took place on this exceedingly dishonest proposition, after which the motion being put, it was lost simply by the casting vote of the Chairman.”

Now, Sir, this account may or may not be exactly correct, but *it is true* that a wide-spread and deep disaffection prevailed and the most violent language and even threats were used towards this Dominion of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it has been argued that we had rebellion at Red River because we did not first consult the feelings and wishes of the people of that region. Well, I can only say that you will rarely hear that explanation attempted at Red River. Why, sir, I have myself seen on petitions praying for annexation to Canada many of the names of those who were foremost in endeavouring to prevent that union, and if it had been that this was really the cause we would, I think, have found all classes joining in it, instead of its being confined to that portion of the population who had the least property at stake and to the friends and sympathizers of the Hudson Bay Company.

Now, if we assume that the officers of the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Garry were anxious, or even willing, that Canada should possess the North West Territory we find it utterly impossible to explain the fact of their criminal inaction, their advice to Governor McDougall to leave the territory, their surrender of their Fort, their advice to the people to join the Provisional Government of President Riel. But if we assume their complicity in the matter, we can readily understand the prevalent belief among the loyal people, both English and French, of Manitoba, that the disaffection and dissatisfaction of the Hudson Bay Company’s officers, the disappointment of Governor MacTavish at not being appointed Governor, caused them to hope that with Riel as their tool and agent they could keep out the Governor, disgust Canada with her bargain, and keep the country for some years longer, a reserve for fur bearing animals with the consequent extension of the fur trading profits. That they purposed taking steps which would lead to robbery, and end in murder, I am not prepared to state, but the general belief is that with Governor McDougall turned back, and

with a Hudson Bay Co. officer at the head of a Provisional Government they could have forced Canada into an arrangement more suitable to themselves even if less profitable to shareholders. However, this may be, I have not risen to make statements on my own responsibility. I will read to the House a number of affidavits bearing on the matter, and although I could say much from my own knowledge that is relative and corroborative, yet I refrain, and leave hon. gentlemen to what opinion they deem fit from the evidence I present. As for myself, I shall be glad if they are able to do so, yet, until that body can show that their responsible officers acted as loyal men should act under similar circumstances, I cannot consent to their receiving one penny of the money of this Dominion.

The first statement bearing upon the subject is that of Sgt. James Mulligan, a Pensioner of Her Majesty’s 17th Foot and lately and for some time Chief of the Police Force in the Town of Winnipeg. Sgt. Mulligan being duly sworn before one of the recently appointed Manitoba Justices of the Peace states among other things:

“That hearing that the buildings of Dr. Schultz were threatened with a consequent danger of fire extending to the town, said James Mulligan, then Chief of Police, proceeded at once to Fort Garry, and spoke to Chief Factor Dr. Cowan, who was a Justice of the Peace and in charge of Fort Garry, told him what he, the said Mulligan, had heard. Said Mulligan urged said Cowan to take steps to prevent such an outrage, and asked for instructions how to proceed. Cowan answered, what can we do? Said Mulligan replied that it would be advisable to call out the 300 special constables who had been engaged. Said Cowan refused to do so, and said Mulligan returned to take what precautions he could with the two policemen under his charge. Said James Mulligan further says that before the rebels assembled at Stinking River, he gave due notice to said Justice Cowan of their intention to do so, and that the said Justice Cowan seemed to take no notice of it. That repeatedly afterwards up to the time of the Fort being occupied by Riel and his men, the said Mulligan did urge upon the said Cowan the danger in which the Fort stood, and a short time before did inform the said Cowan that the rebels meditated doing so immediately and again urged the said Cowan to call upon the said 300 special constables, but was in all cases distinctly refused. Said James Mulligan further says that a short time after the rebels had taken Fort Garry he went to said Fort with one Sergeant Major Power and requested an interview with Governor McTavish, that he was told that Governor McTavish was too sick to see anyone, but was referred by Dr. Cowan to Acting Governor Judge Black. To Judge Black the said James Mulligan said, I have come herewith Sergeant Major Power to request permission to raise the British Flag and to defend it. Judge Black asked him how that could be done. Said Mulligan declared that he could call on the pensioners to the number of thirty and get as many more as he wanted from the loyal population. Said Black said, will see the Governor to-night and we will see about it, and I will give you an answer to-morrow. On or about three o’clock on the following day the said Mulligan was informed that the request about the flag *could not be granted, and that his services with pensioners and loyal men were not required.* Said James Mulligan further says that on the 29th November, 1869 he did receive from Governor MacTavish an order in writing to procure the services of