

No. 3.

*Mr. Taylor to Mr. Fish.*

ST. PAUL, November 16, 1869.

SIR: The attempt to extend the Canadian confederation over Selkirk settlement and the districts thence extending to the Rocky Mountains, meets with armed resistance from the French population, mostly of mixed Indian blood, who are more than equal in number to the English, Scotch, and American settlers. I estimate the French element at six thousand, capable of sending one thousand men into the field. Of the latter, fully one-half, mounted and armed, occupy the roads and fords between Pembina, on the international frontier, and Fort Garry—points on the Red River of the North, separated by a distance of seventy miles. They have forcibly ejected Hon. Wm. McDougall, who had passed two miles beyond the frontier, with the purpose of assuming his duties as lieutenant governor, under the dominion of Canada, on the 1st of December.

Of the situation of this Red River community, prior to the late attempt to incorporate Territory and people as part of Canada, I refer you to the following executive documents:

1. "Relations between the United States and Northwest British America."—House Executive Document (June 20, 1862) No. 146, second session of the thirty-seventh Congress.

2. "Commercial relations with British America," pp. 23-36, House Executive Document (June 12, 1866) No. 128, first session, thirty-ninth Congress.

Under the Canadian confederation act a negotiation between the English and Canadian governments and the Hudson's Bay Company recently resulted in a transfer of the territory between longitude 90° and the Rocky Mountains, hitherto claimed under the charter of the company, to Canada. The people of Selkirk had no voice in the cession. In advance of its consummation, Canadian officials appeared in the settlement, projecting roads and executing surveys of land. The Canadian parliament passed an act for a provisional government, which provided for a lieutenant governor and councilors, of his appointment, not exceeding fifteen nor less than seven in number. In the governor and council all legislative power was vested. Soon it was announced that most of these councilors would accompany the governor from Canada, thus depriving the Selkirk people of all representation, however indirectly, in their government. Other apprehensions were excited during a six months' delay in the extension of Canadian jurisdiction. The people became greatly excited with a rumor that they would be required by Canada to pay for the lands occupied by them and their ancestors for fifty years. Accustomed to a uniform duty of four per cent., the prospect of a Canadian tariff, with an average of fifteen or twenty per cent., increased the public dissatisfaction. Under these circumstances it was not difficult for a few leaders to improvise a military organization, proclaim a provisional government, and turn back the representative of the dominion of Canada at the border.

I inclose the newspaper version of the event.

Mr. Taché, the Catholic bishop at St. Boniface, is absent in Europe, and his priesthood, dissatisfied by the prospect of a large Canadian and American emigration, have taken no measures to allay the excitement among their parishioners.

Whether the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company will earnestly