

ity and its limitations are defined in section 93 of the British North America Act. As this section, and its sub-sections, are the only portions of that act having any immediate bearing on our subject, it will be quoted verbatim further on in this paper.

### RED RIVER JUST BEFORE THE UNION.

When the federation of those old provinces was consummated, the vast territory, of which what is now the province of Manitoba formed a portion, was for the most part practically a terra incognita—a "great lone land." A large proportion of its sparse population were more or less nomadic in their habits. There were hunters, trappers and traders, and a few adventurers of various nationalities. These, with the Indian tribes, practically composed the population. Civilization was represented by the Hudson Bay company's officers, a few earnest and devoted clergymen of the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican denominations, and a handful of merchants and agricultural settlers.

The territory was, of course, under the sovereignty of Great Britain, but the only government which the country knew or needed (under the then circumstances) was administered by the Hudson's Bay company's authorities, with the sanction, of course, and at the instance of, the Imperial government.

The great potential agricultural wealth of the territory had been understood in Canada, and because of the existence of this wealth, and for other reasons of a political nature, it was deemed desirable to embrace the great region in the Canadian confederation. An arrangement had been made by the Canadian government, with the Hudson's Bay company, by which the former was to pay the latter £300,000 as compensation for the surrender of part of its lands and its jurisdiction.

### THE SETTLERS HAD REAL GRIEVANCES.

It would seem that the Canadian government, having thus arranged with the Hudson's Bay company had considered that the work of annexing the territory had been virtually com-

pleted. It had forgotten about the inhabitants of the country and their rights; or it had calculated that, these inhabitants being so few in number, and of such primitive habits and understanding, they probably did not themselves realize that they had any rights, and that, if the matter required any consideration at all, it could be postponed to a more convenient season. The government had forgotten that the actual inhabitants—the resident population of a country—have rights which are paramount to all other claims.

The population in the settled portion of the territory consisted about the end of 1869, of 12,000 souls. Of these 5,000 were French half-breeds, 5,000 English half-breeds, the remaining 2,000 being white persons. Many of the latter were Canadians, and appear to have been markedly characterized by the speculative, adventurous, fortune-hunting spirit which is usually the distinctive trait of the individuals comprising the advance guard of civilization in a new country. He who has dwelt in a frontier land, in the early phases of its development, knows that the pioneer speculator is not a person whose personal progress or prosperity is likely to be retarded to any appreciable degree, by his fastidious sense of honor, or by the searching scrutiny to which he submits his own commercial acts. He is generally admitted, indeed, to acknowledge very little restraint in transactions involving considerations of meum and tuum. His ideal may be summed up in the vulgar expression of "get there;" and if in "getting there," it should incidentally happen that some other person had to be over-reached, the enterprise would probably be all the more attractive, and success all the more enjoyed on that account.

It would appear that, in the case of this new territory, even the officials of the Canadian government, had conducted themselves in such a manner as to inspire the simple-minded natives with a feeling of anything but confidence and security. The land-grabbing spirit was rampant. And it is to be feared, that not a few native owners were induced to part with their holdings for little or no consideration, by means which it would be far from exaggeration to term unscrupulous. Not only this, but a certain highhandedness on the part of the officials, their undisguised contemptuous treatment of the natives, and their apparent inability to comprehend the possibility of these

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