

ments which had taken service under the Crown of England in the Continental wars of 1812. A part of the regiment had been sent over to Canada, and Lord Selkirk, with the permission of the authorities, hired some of them to go with him in order to retake possession of the forts which had been captured by the North-West Company. That regiment was composed mostly of Swiss and German soldiers. Some of them who accompanied Lord Selkirk took up land and settled in the parish of St. Boniface; that is to say, in the territory lying east and almost opposite Fort Douglass, which is now comprised in the limits of the city of Winnipeg, and those settlers formed the parish of St. Boniface. It was a matter of surprise to me to know how it happened that the title of St. Boniface was given to that diocese. Rev. Father Provencher, who afterwards became the first Catholic bishop of that territory, when he saw so many German and Swiss settled there, gave to that part of the territory the name of St. Boniface, which is that of a German saint. We know, also, that there is a small slough which runs east of St. Boniface and empties itself into Red River, which slough is known to this day as German Creek. Upon that creek and at that point is the site of a church, and that then formed a very flourishing and populous settlement and parish, and it was called by Bishop Provencher the diocese of St. Boniface. Unfortunately, those Swiss and German soldiers did not remain very long in the settlement. Some of them, the minority, married French-speaking half-breed women, and that union, up to the present day, has given rise to large families; but most of the soldiers went away, thinking that under the then circumstances of the country they could do better by going to the United States or back to Canada. At that period, 1822, we have a fixed population for the first time in the history of the territory. That population was comprised, first, of the Scotch who were brought over by Lord Selkirk from Scotland; second, the descendants and families of those Scots and the Germans of the Murons regiment; and, third, the half-breeds, who originated from the union of French Canadians and Indian women. Thus we had three elements in the population then existing in the North-West Territories. In his arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company, Lord Selkirk stipulated that he would give so much to that company, and undertake to plant, I think, 1,000 families within a certain number of years, and at any time that company could resume possession of the lands, and then the colonists would look to the company for their titles. In 1783 there were 5,000 people employed in that prosperous and best paying trade of the North-West Company. In those times, the French Canadians especially, took to that life, and we see amongst the half-breeds, noble names, the names of the nobility of France. In fact, we have the blood of the French families of New France instilled in that growing colony in the North-West. Members of those families, who saw a colony planted on the shores of Red River, that there was a church established, and educational institutions organised, emigrated to that distant point in the west; and after they retired from the service of the Hudson Bay Company they returned with their families, and settled in the important parish of St. Boniface. That is the origin of the half-breed nation in the North-West Territory, and I say that nobler blood and better parentage could not have originated it. It became the duty of those priests, whom Lord Selkirk had obtained from the bishop of Quebec, to see to the educational institutions; and, in course of time, sisters of charity, and sisters devoted to educational work, were brought into that country by the clergymen from the Province of Quebec. Those half-breed families, whether Scotch, or whether the descendants of the Murons regiment, are half-breeds, and had, at a certain time, and as late as 1840, as good facilities as they could have had in the Province of Quebec, or any other Province of Canada. Now, Sir, after these people

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settled in parishes, those parishes commenced to grow, and gave rise to many others. After the parish of St. Boniface had grown, it expanded into the parishes of St. Vital, St. Norbert, St. Charles, St. François Xavier, St. Paul, and others, and we found them all growing and improving. The population being under the régime of the Hudson Bay Company, had their own peculiar existence. As you may well judge, these people gave themselves to agricultural pursuits, and as there was no market for their surplus produce, they took to hunting as well. Hunting the buffalo was a benefit to them, as it was to the Hudson Bay Company, and that company encouraged them in hunting as much as possible. There was no currency in the colony. The currency mainly consisted of promissory notes, issued by the Hudson Bay Company, redeemable by bills of exchange, granted at sixty days' sight, on the Governor, the Deputy Governor, and the commissioner of the Hudson Bay Company, in London. I have seen this paper currency which existed in the Territories in 1870. It seems that the smaller the denomination of the bill the greater its size. A bill for a shilling, the people called a blanket, on account of its large dimensions, and they grew less in proportion according to the amount represented. The £5 notes were very small, the size being about that of our present bank bills. As these people could only grow on their land what they could consume or sell, they had, to a large extent, to depend on hunting to supply them with meat, and you would see a part of those parishes, after the seed was sown, organising for the buffalo hunts on the plains. A priest, as a general rule, would accompany them, and they would form camps, numbering from 500 to 1,500 people. As might be expected, these pursuits had a great influence on the character of the people; their characteristics were largely derived from their pursuits. When these people would go to the plains they would return months afterwards with their carts laden with the best kind of meat, and after harvesting their crops and selling what they could sell, they would have all they could wish to depend upon for the fall and the winter. When they were on the plains, these people were, of course, among the Indian tribes, whom they would have to fight occasionally. In fact, Sir, in these times, and to a very recent period, the half-breeds were the terror of the Indian tribes on the plains, and we have an instance, amongst others, that occurred in 1852, on the Grand Coteau of the Missouri, in which 67 half-breeds defended themselves for two days against 2,000 Sioux; and when I went to Manitoba some 15 years ago, I used to enjoy very much the narration given to me of that encounter, from eye witnesses of the fight. On that occasion Bishop Lafèche, of Three Rivers, who was then a missionary in the North-West, was present. I believe he was one of the wounded, and that he is still lame from the wound he received in that engagement. From the habits of life of these people, from the constitution of the country, from the distance which lay between this isolated group of settlers and the rest of the world, we may well imagine the characteristics of that nation. A spirit of independence and self-reliance were amongst the characteristics of that nation. Everyone had to look after himself, and a half-breed with his family, on the plains, was just as independent, and just as secure from all the necessities of life, as any citizen of our own towns or cities. With his family, his gun and his horse, he could depend on himself for a living for himself and his family. They were isolated, as I have said, from the rest of the world. They were 500 miles from the nearest terminus of the American system of railways, at the latest times. They were sixty days' travel from the Province of Canada, and they had depended on themselves entirely for their means of subsistence. We have seen the origin of the half-breed people. We have seen the origin of their title to property, and from