

the illegality and danger of the course upon which they had entered, and to dissuade them from the further prosecution of their unlawful purposes. Measures, it is true, of a positively coercive nature have not been resorted to, for the simple reason that we have had no reliable force to insure their safety and success; and we are strongly impressed with the belief that there is great, if not overwhelming weight in the reasons given in my former letter for the authorities hesitating to adopt the perilous step of deliberately calling upon one portion of so peculiar a community as this to confront the other in an attitude of determined hostility.

With regard to that part of your letter in which you make such express reference to my position as the present legal ruler of the Country, and to my responsibility for the preservation of the public peace, permit me to say it is because I so deeply feel that responsibility, that I have hitherto been restrained from sanctioning a course so likely, I may almost say, so certain, to engender a strife which, for years to come, might prove fatal to the peace and prosperity of the whole country, and make all government impossible. It is unquestionable that the preservation of the public peace is the paramount duty of every Government; but while in ordinary circumstances it might be reasonable enough to cast upon us the exclusive responsibility of preserving the public peace, it may, perhaps, at the same time, admit of doubt whether some degree of responsibility did not also rest upon others in a case of so exceptional a character as this,—a case in which not merely a whole country is transferred, but also, in a certain sense, a whole people, or, where at least the political condition of the people undergoes such a great change; and it may moreover be a question whether, on the part of the Dominion, the preliminary arrangements for introducing that change have proceeded upon such a just and accurate appreciation of the condition of the country, and the peculiar feelings and habits of its people, as, on such an occasion, was desirable, if not absolutely essential; and whether the complication by which we are now surrounded, may not, to a great extent, be owing to that circumstance. But, at a time like this, when it is felt that all our energies ought to be directed to the possible removal of the obstacles that oppose the peaceable inauguration of your Government, it would be out of place here to go into the discussion of such points as relate to the responsibility of those concerned in the introduction of the new order of things; and I shall therefore proceed to deal with matters of a more practical as well as more pressing nature.

What the ultimate object of the malcontents may be, it is difficult to ascertain, but if they are aiming at establishing a Government of their own, as the leaders whom you met on the 2nd inst, rather prematurely said they had already done, I doubt very much whether the rest of the Settlement are at all likely to submit to such a destination; but whether they may think it best tactily to ignore such a usurpation of power, while it consisted merely in a name, or actively resist it, or take part in the movement in the hope of moderating and directing it, will, I apprehend, greatly depend upon circumstances.

It seems by no means improbable that on both sides of the line there may be persons who are looking with a degree of sympathy upon this movement of the French population; their motives, it is not difficult to imagine, but it seems to be nothing more but infatuation for the leaders of these disturbances to encourage the idea of annexation to the States, for it is highly improbable that, whatever might be the influence of such a change upon the community, its effect upon the French population generally, could hardly fail to prove unfavorable to them.

Excepting in one respect—but that I am sorry to say, a serious if not in a formidable sense—little change, so far as we can learn, has, since my last, come over the arrangements or the spirit of these people. The prevention of your entrance into the Settlement was the object they first proposed to themselves, and upon that object they appear to be as fully bent as ever, being still, as I am informed, collected at several points, in numerous armed bands, in readiness, as we may presume, to obstruct your approach to the Settlement, should that be attempted; and they are, of course, aware that so long as you remain in the neighbourhood, such an attempt is always possible.

The occurrence to which I have alluded in the preceding paragraph as being serious, is this, that on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 2nd inst., a number of these daring people, suddenly, and without the least intimation of their intention to make such a move, took possession of the Gates of Fort Garry, where they placed themselves inside and outside the Gates, to the number in all of about one hundred and twenty, and where, night and day, they have constantly kept a pretty strong armed guard. On being asked what they meant by