

To provide the means of local administration may appear no very difficult matter, nor is it, when the territory to be governed is sufficiently near to feel the influence of the central governing power, and when the governed are men accustomed to exercise all the rights and privileges of British subjects; but place merely the machinery of government in a colony like Red River, where, probably, a majority of the inhabitants have no higher idea of law or order than that which force imposes, and leave the administrators of the law to perform the functions of government, supported only by such a population, and they will be able to preserve law and order just so long as the majority are indulged in their indolent habits, and are allowed to consider that government is established for their special protection, without exacting from them any corresponding duties.

Even the Hudson's Bay Company, who possess an amount of experience, and an organization not easily acquired or maintained in so vast a territory, have felt it necessary to have troops stationed at the Red River colony, not merely for the protection of their fur trade monopoly, for this my experience teaches me they could do with their own resources but as a protection against the discontented and lawless portion of the inhabitants, incited, through the encouragement extended to them by parties in Canada as well as in England, to acts of insubordination, dangerous to the peace and welfare of the colony. Undoubtedly the prescriptive rights which the Company have acquired through their charter, valid or not valid, have enabled them to acquire and to exercise a power and influence, which no other body can obtain with the same amount of means.

We have only to imagine the population of one of the smallest of our counties, half converted into half-breeds, transplanted into Red River to work out a system of government with municipal institutions such as we have in Canada, surrounded with everything that is wild in nature, and cut off from all external aid,—such a state of political existence would continue just so long as Canada furnished the means of propitiating the restless spirits both within and without the colony, or of paying troops to keep them in order. I need not tell you that no government can sustain itself, no matter how good the laws, unless the people subject to those laws, acquiesce in them, and are morally convinced that it is their duty to support them—and what support, I would ask, could the government expect from such a population as would continue at Red River, after the Hudson's Bay Company and all their adherents had withdrawn? For it is not to be supposed that they will remain merely to support a government established for their destruction, and which would have no other effect than to destroy, not only the fur trade, but to extirpate every British feeling, except so much as might be preserved among the paid officers of the Government. Such an expectation would be preposterous.

I have no desire to discuss this question with persons who have less consideration for the Hudson's Bay Co. than they have for mere squatters; for reason is lost on such persons. But I would address myself to those who have really the welfare of Canada at heart, and who are not willing to jeopardize her best interests by any premature attempts to achieve national greatness. This is certainly not the age for monopolies, nor is it exactly the age of reason; but it is decidedly an utilitarian age, and in this view I consider the Hudson's Bay monopoly, ought to be tolerated, not for the benefit of the Company but for the benefit of Canada, and for the benefit of the empire at large; for most assuredly if you drive out the Hudson's Bay Company, you will implant evils tenfold greater in their stead. The marauders and renegades from both sides of the lines will ruin the fur trade, and extirpate the Indians, keeping the isolated colony of Red River in a constant state of alarm and licentiousness, while the communication with Great Britain by sea will be totally abandoned. No other Company or body of individuals with sufficient means will fit out ships to penetrate through fields of ice once a year—for what? when the fur